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Comics INTERNATIONAL

Issue 43 June 1994 | The Comics Industry Monthly | 72 pages 50p / $1.25

Todd McFarlane pulls back top-selling title

Spawn creates comic shop havoc

TODD McFarlane, creator of the industry's top-selling American comic, Spawn, has stunned the trade by making a precedent-setting announcement that the next two issues of his Image published title have been withdrawn.

Scheduled to be released in January and February of this year, **Spawn** #19 and #20 were to be the first McFarlane written and illustrated issues since his three month break to produce his **Spawn/Batman** one-shot. But with the new direct distribution policy stating that titles shipping beyond one month late can be returned by retailers, outspoken industry rebel McFarlane has postponed them yet managed to complete **Spawn** #21 on schedule. This is despite retail belief that issues sell out no matter how late.

McFarlane said "Issues 19 and 20 were already hopelessly late, they were going to have to either be resolicited or shipped on a returnable basis. So I came up with a logical, reasonable compromise. Kill #19 and 20 and ship a non-returnable #21 within the time window that it was solicited for.

"But my decision was a double-edged sword," he continued. "From a creative standpoint it allowed me to create a kick-ass introductory story to a major story arc. Retailers can promote it as a cool and convenient jumping on point for new customers who may have become interested in **Spawn** as a result of the Batman team-ups."

Image's executive director, Larry Marder added "Sometimes it's easy to forget that we're in a non-returnable business. Late returnable comics are a terrible burden on everyone: creators, publishers, distributors and retailers. Todd's ingenious solution to a difficult dilemma is both reasonable and fair to all parties concerned."

Despite this move to avoid returns from distributors, McFarlane was recently quoted in US trade magazine **The Comics Journal** (#166) as being far less willing to compromise.

He said, "Nobody is going to tell me when, how, where and why I can put my comic book. If they [the distributors] pull that, I'll go buy the f*ckin' trucks, and I'll go buy the f*ckin' warehouse, and in a time of recession, I will get people who will pick those books up and deliver them to the stores. Delivering books, that's not a f*ckin' scientific thing."

STOP PRESS

An agreement has been entered into for Kitchen Sink Press, currently celebrating its 25th year, to be acquired for cash and stock by the LA entertainment investment bankers Ocean Capital Corporation.

Kevin Eastman will retain his equity and company founder Denis Kitchen is expected to remain at the helm.

*Fleer is to follow its **X-Men** experiment with a second series of 6½ x 10" trading cards. **FlairPrints** will take the ten most popular cards from the **Flair Marvel Universe** series and reproduce them at full comic book size. These July shipping cards feature characters including Ghost Rider (above) and various X-Men and are printed on laminated board.*

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Issue	Space	Copy	Shipping
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No. 45	July 15	July 21	July 28
No. 46	Aug 12	Aug 18	Aug 25

All bookings are taken as run-of-paper. Specific positions when possible +20%

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A Quality Communications magazine

NEWS · AMERICA ·

Ultraverse plans for second year

AS Malibu's Ultraverse line celebrates its first year of publishing in June, only two new titles are planned for the remainder of 1994. The company's main creative push will be on strengthening existing books as well as new directions for several of them.

As editor-in-chief Chris Ulm explains, "All of the titles that the Ultraverse has launched thus far are those that were originally developed at the first writers' conference in October 1992. Now that we've achieved our first goal, it's time to focus on the Ultraverse titles that we have."

The two new Ultraverse titles scheduled are: **Warstrike** by Dan Danko and Hoang Nguyen (in comic shops this month) and the team book **Ultraforce** by Gerard Jones and super-team artist supreme George Perez, due for release in August.

Ulm said "**Ultraforce** is the logical outgrowth of the way Ultraverse titles have developed over the last year. **Ultraforce** features title characters from three Ultraverse books and will also include guest stars from **Mantra**, **Exiles** and **Freex**."

Freex is the first existing Ultraverse title to undergo radical changes. Beginning in the 40 page July shipping **Giant-Size Freex** #1, the existing line-up will change, with two new members, one of whom will ultimately become the leader of the misfits.

Scott Kolins, fresh from his stint drawing Spider-Man and the Beast in Marvel's **Mutant Agenda**, is the new artist on the Gerard Jones written title.

The **Giant-Size Freex** storyline will tie into **Ultraforce** and **Prime** #12 and the double-sized issue will also feature a *Contrary* solo story by Jones and Martin (**Aquaman**) Egeland.

Departing **Freex** artists Ben Herrera and Mike Christian will become the regular art team on James Robinson's English gun-for-gire character **Firearm** from issue 12.

Above: Howard Chaykin's visualisation of new Ultraverse arch-villain Rafferty.

Herrera and Christian will be joining **Firearm** at a crucial stage, the beginning of a new major story arc that introduces a major new villain and Ultra-killer, the Howard Chaykin designed Rafferty (visual above).

The seven issue *Rafferty Saga* is planned to cross over from **Firearm #12** into **Prime**, **Warstrike**, **Freex**, **The Night Man** and **Sludge** between August 1994 and February 1995.

Several established characters will die at Rafferty's hands, causing repercussions throughout the Ultraverse.

Firearm writer James Robinson describes Rafferty as "very much Alec [Firearm] Swan's 'Professor Moriarty'."

● Malibu has also announced an August release for its first trade paperback, **Prime Time**, featuring the initial four issues of its flagship title **Prime**. The collected edition will feature a new cover by Alex (**Marvels**) Ross.

The trade paperback will also feature *The Evolution of Prime* which will include artist Norm Breyfogle's original development sketches as well as interviews with the series' writers Len Strazewski and Gerard Jones.

A signed and numbered hard-cover edition of **Prime Time**, is being released with an insert plate and a special dustjacket.

● Malibu has announced that **Prime** is currently in development as a video game for an autumn release and that **Prime** #1 has already been transferred to CD-ROM format for *CD-Romix* from Davidson & Associates.

● As readers have commented on a certain amount of confusion because of the similarities between Ultraverse characters Wrath and Warstrike, Malibu promises to resolve matters in the forthcoming **Giant-Size Wrath** #1 as the vigilante's costume will change completely.

● Intent on widening the existing comics buying market, Malibu has recently invested heavily in comics commercials for both US cable and network television. In addition its comics are also featuring in unanticipated product placement.

Ameritech, a privately owned telephone company is currently running an advertisement set in a comic book shop and has a young boy and his friend reading Ultraverse comics while waiting to call home using an Ameritech phonecard. In addition, an Ultraverse ad appears on the side of a bus in the new Charlie Sheen movie, *The Chase*.

New readers: begin here

Comics International is a monthly industry newspaper devoted to the comics medium. As such, it provides details of forthcoming UK and US comics and related items, together with reviews and commentary on current titles.

Certain products mentioned are not available through regular news agent outlets, but only from the 'direct sale' comics specialist retailers and mail order companies. Details of specialist outlets are advertised throughout the magazine, and a listing of the major specialists in Britain is given in our Retail Index and Mail Order Index sections.

***Shipping dates** mentioned for North American titles are the dates copies leave their printers to be air-freighted to distributors for direct sale outlets approximately one week later. These dates and titles do not relate to on sale dates or titles for news agent copies.*

The Marvel and DC titles on general national distribution are on sale in the UK approximately two to three months after the air-freighted copies can be bought through specialist shops and mail order companies dealing with 'advance imports'. Because of the additional shipping costs incurred, these advance copies will be sold at a higher price than the UK price printed on their covers.

***American dollar prices** are listed for US titles with most UK comic shops converting at the rate of 80p = $1.*

Most reputable mail order dealers bear a CoBRA seal on their advertisements. For full details concerning advertisers displaying this Mail Order Protection seal, see page 70.

Jim Lee leaves WildC.A.T.S

JIM LEE, artist and creator of the comic **WildC.A.T.s** and co-founder of its publisher, Image Comics, has decided to leave the book from issue 14. He will take a sabbatical from comic work for an indefinite period of time but intends to return at some point in the future. Jim Lee's final work before his break is expected to be the much delayed **1963 Annual**, written by Alan Moore, scheduled for September.

Jim Lee's main reason for leaving one of the industry's top selling comic books is that his wife is about to have her second child. His family life is known for upsetting his schedule, with the arrival of his first child having led to his early issues of **WildC.A.T.s** being considerably later than intended.

Jim Lee comments, "I've been doing this more or less without a break since I got into the business in 1987. I've come to the realisation that the first stage of my career has reached a natural, logical conclusion. The timing is right, and it will be nice to have the opportunity to regroup, to rethink my style and approach to comic books."

Lee will also use the opportunity to pursue and promote the new **WildC.A.T.s** animated series, recently picked up by CBS-TV along with other Image inspired cartoons. However, this has not influenced Lee's decision to leave the comic book. He adds "That decision was made last year, even before we got into development with CBS. Back then, I knew I wanted to do nine to ten issues at a fairly good clip, to show Image's critics that I did know what a deadline meant."

This summer's US conventions will see his last scheduled public appearances for the foreseeable future, and will focus on his promoting the **WildC.A.T.s** cartoon.

Bill Kaplan, editor of Lee's comics line, Wildstorm Productions, says "Jim wants the fans to know that although his pencils won't appear on the pages, his ideas will still be present." Jim Lee intends to have some creative input into the many titles **WildC.A.T.s** has spawned.

The title will not be discontinued when Lee leaves and Homage artist Travis (**Darkstars**) Charest, already a fan-favourite, will take over the book and James (**Firearm**) Robinson will write issues 14-15.

Jim Lee first came to prominence drawing **The Uncanny X-Men** and the multi-million selling **X-Men** #1 before leaving Marvel Comics with other top selling artists to form Image Comics.

Lee's departure from **WildC.A.T.s** may cause mixed fan reaction. While some appreciate that **WildC.A.T.s** will not be delayed and are looking forward to the new creative team, others only buy the book because of Jim Lee. Another point expressed by more cynical comic buyers is that Jim Lee will continue to receive large amounts of money from his books, without contributing to them at all and that the sabbatical might be "a nice little earner".

Jim Lee's Homage studios has announced that its entire range of merchandise has been cancelled, but it will be resolicited at a future date. *(Richard Johnston)*

Marvel launches Fantastic Force

FOLLOWING events in Marvel's **The Fantastic Four**, the grown-up Franklin Richards takes it upon himself to keep his dead father's dream alive and the results can be seen in the August 2nd shipping **Fantastic Force #1**.

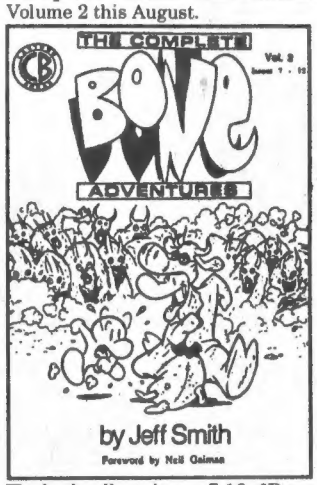
The new team consists of Franklin and four companions; Myydas, an exiled Inhuman; a vibranium-powered Wakandan named Vibraxis; Huntara — a warrior woman — and the cosmic Kismet. Together they journey into the Negative Zone to encounter their first menace.

Fantastic Force #1 is written by Greg (**Daredevil**) Wright, with art by Mike Gustovich and Don Hudson. The first issue will have a foil stamped cover and retail for $2.50.

IN BRIEF

Bone Collection

CARTOON Books will release **The Complete Bone Adventures** Volume 2 this August.



The book collects issues 7-12 of **Bone** with a foreword by Neil Gaiman and will retail for $9.95.

Chaykin bonus

TO REWARD the trade for its support of Malibu's new Bravura title, **Power and Glory**, the publishers will be giving retailers a free copy of a limited edition blue foil version #1 of the Howard Chaykin comic, limited to only 10,000 copies.

Comics veterans die

MURRAY Boltinoff died on March 6th at his home in Miami, Florida. He was 83.

A major achievement in a notable career, Boltinoff is credited with helping to introduce a more sinister Dark Knight in the wake of the '60s camp Batman.

Boltinoff went to work for Whitney Ellsworth at DC in 1940 after submitting scripts (and arguably because of his brother Henry working as a cartoonist for the company). He soon was employed there as an in-house editor.

By the 1950s he became co-editor with Jack Schiff and art editor on **Batman, Detective, House of Mystery, Mr D.A, Aquaman, Gangbusters, Dale Evans** and **Western Comics**.

As editor of **The Brave and the Bold**, it was in #79 that he introduced a new era for the Batman through Neal Adams supplying the art for a Batman-Deadman team-up, which complemented Adams's own Deadman series in **Strange Adventures**. Boltinoff's revamping of the Batman through Adams led to Bat-titles editor Julius Schwartz being pressured to adopt a similar stance for the character.

Boltinoff also introduced a new Green Arrow costume (**Brave and the Bold** 85) and took back-up heroes The Legion of Super-Heroes out of **Adventure Comics** and moved them into **Action Comics** and then into **Superboy** where they soon took over the title.

Boltinoff also occasionally wrote ghost and war stories under various pseudonyms and was author of **Witches and Wheels**, a book which was reprinted several times.

After a career of 45 years which ended in retirement in 1986, Boltinoff said of his departure from comics "With mild acidity, when nobody was looking, I slipped out."

Don Thompson, co-editor of **Comic Buyer's Guide** has died aged 58, after months of failing health.

Thompson began his journalistic career as a reporter for the **Cleveland Press**, covering everything from crime stories to financial reports. A founding father of US comics fandom, he was also a short story writer, having had his first work published in **Venture Science Fiction** magazine.

Axis axed

AXIS Comics' co-founder Larry Stroman has announced that the recently established publishing company has now ceased trading. Poor sales have been attributed as the major reason.

This comes unexpectedly after Axis had just announced a massive expansion to their line, including **Shaman's Tears** by Mike Grell and **Quantum 5** by Joe Phillips.

Despite Axis being only the latest creator-owned comics company folding, this hasn't stopped other creators from starting their own publishing companies. In recent months the industry has heard that Bart (**Violator**) Sears is setting up Ominous Press and Ken (**Tempus Fugitive**) Steacy has announced the formation of his new company, Fractal Comics with its first title **Victor Vector & Yondo** scheduled for later this year.

Sandman statue

DC continues its series of character statues by releasing a highly detailed figure of Morpheus, the Dream King. Based on P. Craig Russell's illustrations from **Sandman #50**, the cold-cast porcelain figurine (pictured above) depicts The Sandman holding a sphere of Austrian crystal. Sculpted by Randy Bowen, the limited edition figurine will not ship until November and retails for $135.00.

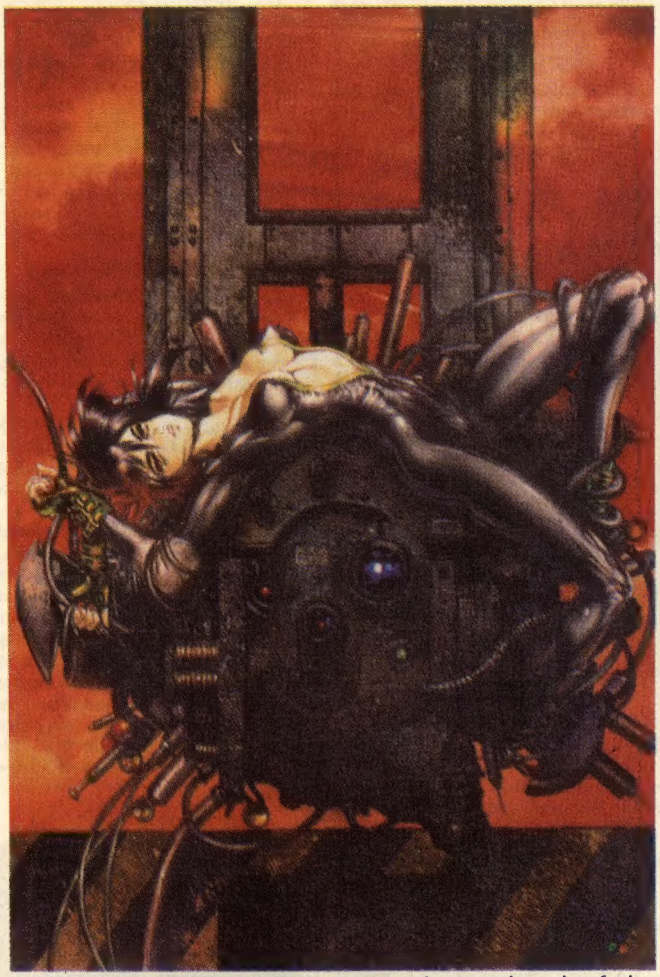
Graphitti Designs has obtained the rights to produce statues of the classic EC characters of the 1950s *The Crypt-Keeper, The Old Witch* and *The Vault-Keeper*.

The series of statues begins with the William Stout designed **The Crypt-Keeper**. As with the **Sandman** statue, the Randy Bowen Designs Studio are producing the sculpture. Limited to 2500 copies, the $195.00 statue will ship on September 20th.

Zero error

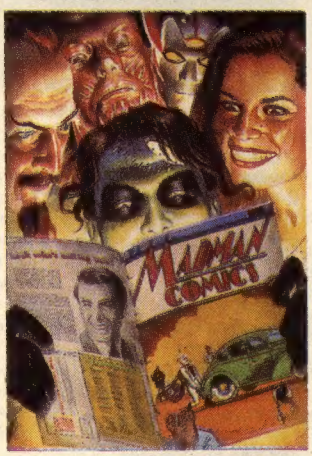
Comics International would like to point out that, despite a report last issue, DC Comics will not be renumbering any of its superhero universe titles from issue one following the zero issues which are part of the **Zero Hour** crossover.

We apologise for any confusion this error may have caused.



EXCLUSIVE to Capital City Distribution customers is an ongoing series of colour prints produced by 1000 Editions. The August shipping ***Ghost in the Shell II*** *(above) by* ***Appleseed*** *creator Masamune Shirow is the third in the series and retails for $24.95. Shirow's first two prints, still available, are $19.95 each.*

Artist Jam for Madman cards



TO commemorate the addition of the **Madman** creator, Michael Allred, to the Legend imprint, Dark Horse is producing a set of 50 trading cards entitled **Madman x50: Bubblegum Not Included**. It consists of Madman rendered by a range of artists in their own unique styles.

Creators include **Jeff (Bone)** Smith and Alex **(Marvels)** Ross — see above, plus Frank **(Sin City)** Miller, Arthur **(X-Men)** Adams, Matt **(Grendel)** Wagner and veterans Alex Toth and Jack Kirby.

Each boxed set of cards will retail for $14.95 and ship in August.

Vertigo creators on Dark Knight

DC's **Legends of the Dark Knight** #64 is a departure from the regular several episode story arc formula. Containing a complete Batman story, it is produced by Vertigo mainstay creators. Jamie **(Animal Man)** Delano provides the script for artists Chris **(Death: The High Cost of Living)** Bachalo and Mark **(Shade)** Pennington.

The story tells of a young fugitive's obsession with the Batman and the Dark Knight's attempts to reform him.

Legends of the Dark Knight #64 ships June and retails for $1.95.

The Crow's big screen debut

THE movie adaptation of writer-artist James O'Barr's cult comic series **The Crow** opened in American cinemas in May and is set for a June premiere in the UK.

O'Barr conceived **The Crow** in 1981, but it wasn't until 1988 that he found a publisher in Caliber Comics, who produced the erratic four issue run, later to be reprinted as an album by Tundra Press.

The film stars the late Brandon Lee, son of martial arts star Bruce Lee. O'Barr credits Brandon Lee for the faithful rendition of the character.

"He really loved the Crow. And for that reason his fiance and mother were adamant about having the film finished after his untimely death," said O'Barr.

Defiant plans Schism crossover

JIM SHOOTER'S Defiant Comics, publishers of **Warriors of Plasm** and **Dark Dominion**, is to produce multi-lingual US editions of some of their books, beginning with former **X-Men** writer Chris Claremont's new title **Prudence & Caution**.

The new series will be produced in both English and Spanish language versions. Defiant's J. Clark Smith said, "We constantly look for ways to be reader friendly".

Prudence & Caution leads directly into Defiant's major summer crossover *Schism*, which will run through all the Defiant titles as well as in its own bookends mini-series.

The four issues of **Schism** are written by Len Wein, with art from former Marvel UK artist Dave Taylor over breakdowns by David Lapham and finished inks are provided by former DC editorial director Dick Giordano.

Schism will retail for $3.25, shipping weekly across the last two weeks of July and the first two weeks in August.

ClanDestine debuts in ongoing series

ALAN Davis's **The ClanDestine** has been resolicited by Marvel US for an August 16th launch.

The $2.95 title was part of Marvel UK's new campaign at the American market, but the company cut back its publishing and Alan Davis and inker Mark Farmer were left with no firm publishing schedule.

Issue 1 has a foil stamped cover, and begins an ongoing series as opposed to Marvel UK's 4-issue plan.

Adults Only Japanese Animation

GUY

18

Awakening of The Devil

ANIMANIA

ANIMATION WITH ATTITUDE

Available on Video June 27th

Dark Horse Comics set for huge summer expansion

IN THE wake of the comics industry's massive expansion during the early 1990s leading to a slump in sales, many of the publishers responsible for the flood of new product have cut back on titles and concentrated on the revitalising of their existing titles.

However, through its various publishing lines, Dark Horse Comics has continued to launch new titles over the last twelve months.

These have included the expansion of its *Comics' Greatest World* superhero imprint; the Spike Lee devised *Comics from Spike* imprint which deals with racial tensions, drug abuse and slice of life situations; the creator-owned *Legend* imprint and the company's initial success through licensed film tie-ins.

With the summer being one of the most lucrative for comics publishers, the Oregon-based company is firing its opening salvo with no fewer than 18 new mini-series and one-shots.

Legends grow

● **Concrete: Killer Smile** sees the return of Paul Chadwick's critically acclaimed 1200lb rock-like hero in a race against time to save his companion, Larry Munro, from a psychopathic pyromaniac.

Despite his popularity, this four issue mini-series features the first appearance of the character since the two-part **Concrete: Eclectica** series of 1993. The first issue ships on July 12th and retails for $2.95.

● John Byrne spins off his newly created **Danger Unlimited** Universe with **Babe**, a tale about a invulnerable young woman who is found wandering naked along the Californian coastline only to be abused by those who find her.

Despite the news that Byrne's mainstream super-hero series **Danger Unlimited** has been cancelled because of poor sales, the presumed to be more commercial spin-off **Babe** is projected as an ongoing series in four-issue story arcs. The first issue ships on July 26th and retails for $2.50.

● Byrne is also the writer-artist on **Aliens: Earth Angel**. Collected from the twelve instalments published in **Diamond Previews** during 1993, this 32 page $2.95 one-shot features a new cover by John Byrne painted by Gary Cody.

● **Dark Horse Presents** will incorporate the Legend imprint on its covers for the foreseeable future as. In addition to regular material, it will showcase Paul Chadwick's **Concrete** (featured in a one-off story) and Mike Mignola's first fully scripted **Hellboy** (a four part tale entitled *The Wolves of St. August*).

● With the conclusion of **Sin City: A Dame to Kill For**, Frank Miller is now concentrating on **Robby the Robot and the Big Guy** with **Hard Boiled's** Geof Darrow before returning to **Sin City** in November for a new mini-series.

*Above: Frank Miller cover art for the **X: One Shot to the Head** special.*

Alien Invaders

Dark Horse first become a major player in the comics industry through its licensing of the **Aliens** film characters for a 1988 black and white mini-series.

While other publishers movie adaptations and spin-offs had fared poorly, the popularity and quality of the **Aliens** titles led to Dark Horse acquiring further successful box-office characters such as **Terminator, Predator, The Thing from Another World, Star Wars** and **Indiana Jones.**

Dark Horse continues to support its mainstay with further film-related titles planned for summer:

● **Predator: Invaders From the Fourth Dimension** is set in 1959 during the height of Hollywood's SF B-movie craze.

When a Predator lands on the back lot of a movie studio in the middle of an alien invasion movie, the only person who knows he is there is a young boy with a pair of special glasses.

In the tradition of the classic SF/Red Menace movies of the '50s, the boy tries to convince adults that this monster exists. But it is isn't until half of the unbelieving adults fall victim to the Predator that anybody takes the boy seriously.

Written by Jerry Prosser with art from Jim Somerville and Brian Garvey, this 48 page one-shot ships on July 26th and retails for $3.95.

● Dark Horse continues to maintain the interest in **Star Wars** with three new two-part mini-series and a 20-part maxi-series.

● **Classic Star Wars: The Early Adventures** reprints newspaper strips by the original **Magnus: Robot Fighter** artist, Russ Manning, reformatted and retouched by Manning protege Rick Hoberg. The 20 issue series begins on August 9th and retails for $2.50.

● **Classic Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back** is a two parter reprinting the Marvel Comics adaptation of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Written by Archie Goodwin with art by Al Williamson, the 64 page issues have been recoloured and retail for $3.95. The first issue ships on August 30th.

● **Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi — The Freedon Nadd Uprising** is a new mini-series by the company's current **Star Wars** writer-in-residence Tom Veitch. This two issue series is a prequel to this autumn's 6-issue **Star Wars: Dark Lords of the Sith**, with both series set 4,000 years before the stories told in George Lucas's films.

Artwork on this two-issue series is provided by Tony (**Aliens: Colonial Marines**) Akins and Denis (**Action Comics**) Rodier.

The first issue ships on August 2nd and retails for $2.50.

● **Classic Star Wars: A New Hope** is a two part prestige format series reprinting the original Marvel comics movie adaptation by Roy Thomas and Howard Chaykin.

The new edition will feature a new digitally separated colour process and new covers by Art Adams on issue one and Adam Hughes on issue two. Both 64 page issues will retail for $3.95.

● An archaeological dig in Greece is the setting for a new two part Indiana Jones story which once more pits the hero against pre-World War II Nazis.

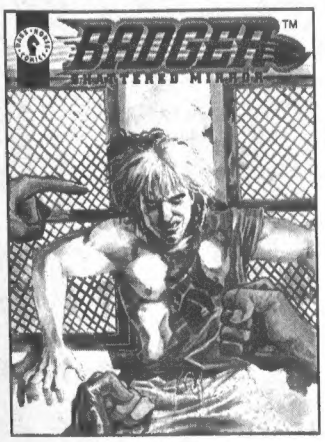
Indiana Jones and the Golden Fleece is written by Dave Rawson and Pat McGreal, the two writers who reintroduced **Fighting American** to comic fans in the recent DC mini series. Art is by Ken (**Aquaman**) Hooper, with inks by Stan (**Swamp Thing**) Woch.

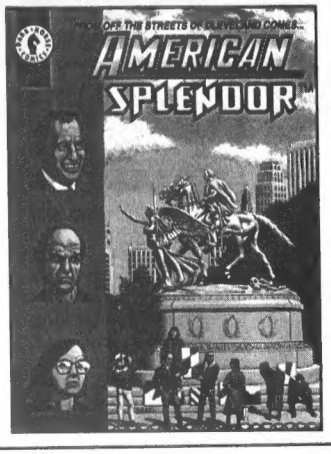
The first issue ships on June 14th and retails for $2.50.

● Adapted from their own movie production, **Time Cop** is a two parter written by Mark (**Aliens**) Verheiden with art by Ron (**Trekker**) Randall. It stars Max Walker, a futuristic policeman who travels back in time to prevent a crime which can totally destroy the future. The first issue ships on July 5th and will retail for $2.50.

A world of heroes

SINCE the creation of Dark Horse's *Comics' Greatest World* imprint, the





company has expanded its new superhero universe with ongoing series, mini-series and one-shots featuring characters introduced in last year's 16 part maxi-series.

● **Will To Power** is a 16 episode weekly crossover, told in four story arcs, each being four issues. It stars all the characters created in last year's *Comics' Greatest World* series.

The first three issues will be written by **Animal Man**'s new writer Jerry **(Exquisite Corpse)** Prosser with art by Mike **(Batman)** Manley, while the fourth instalment is written by Chris **(Predator)** Warner with art by Jim **(Thing From Another World)** Sommerville and Brian **(Iron Man)** Garvey. All four parts are 16 pages without ads and retail for $1.00, shipping between June 14th and July 5th.

Will to Power is followed by two one-shots and a new ongoing series:

● **Ghost Special** #1 is a 48 page title starring the gun-toting female spirit written by Eric Luke, writer of the film *Explorers*, and drawn by Matt Haley and Tom Simmons.

This one-shot will set the scene for the monthly **Ghost** series scheduled for April 1995 featuring the artwork of Adam Hughes, who also supplies the cover for the $3.95 July 12th shipping special.

● **X: One Shot to the Head** is a collection of the *Comics' Greatest World* vigilante's original adventures which were originally presented in **Dark Horse Comics** #8-10. The $2.50 one-shot ships August 9th.

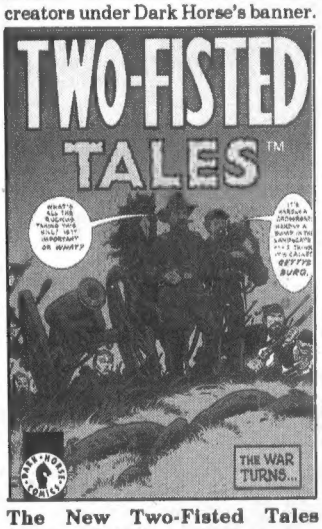
● **Division 13** by Keith Giffen and Alex Morrissey continues the adventures of the superhero team introduced in last year's 16 part *Comics Greatest World* crossover.

The first issue ships on September 6th and retails for $2.50.

Dark Horse takes over existing titles

Further enhancing the company's line-up, a number of comics which originally appeared under other publishing imprints have moved over to Dark Horse, most notably Matt Wagner's **Grendel**.

This summer sees the return of several favourite characters and creators under Dark Horse's banner.



The New Two-Fisted Tales Volume 2 features the last story produced by the late Harvey Kurtzman in this second collection of war stories. Also featuring contributions from Don Lomax, Leo Duranona and John Garcia, plus a Wally Wood & Harvey Kurtzman EC reprint, this 48 page one-shot ships August 23rd, priced $4.95.

● Harvey Pekar's **American Splendor Special: A Step Out of the Nest** is a new one-shot autobiographical account of Pekar's invitation to appear on tv's *Late Night with David Letterman*, only to be replaced at the last minute by Barry Manilow.

The 32 page one-shot is drawn by Joe Zabel and inked by Gary Dumm and ships August 23rd priced $2.95.

● Mike Baron's **Badger** returns in two new titles, having being on hold since First Comics ceased in 1991.

Badger: Shattered Mirror and **Badger: Zen Pop Funny-Animal Version** will both be written by Baron. **Shattered Mirror** is a four-issue series with art from Jill **(Sandman)** Thompson. The first $2.50 issue ships on July 19th. Also $2.50, **Zen Pop Funny Animal Version** #1 (of 2) ships July 12th.

Both series will focus on the multiple personalities exhibited by Viet Nam veteran Norbert Sykes alias the Badger whose original First Comics run lasted for 69 issues and a four-part mini **(Badger Goes Berserk)** between 1983 and 1991. The character also has the distinction of being the first character to be involved in an inter-company crossover since the breakdown of the original DC-Marvel series of the 1970s. Badger met Coyote in Epic's **Coyote #14**.

Continued diversity

Surprisingly, Japanese manga is a popular comics cult generally ignored by major independent publishers with little development since Studio Proteus broke away from Eclipse Comics in favour of Dark Horse in 1990.

Since then, the company has expanded its manga line following the success of **Outlanders**, **Dominion** and **Venus Wars**.

Shipping at the end of August is the first of a six-issue mini-series based on the AnimEigo video **Oh My Goddess!** It tells of a hapless young student who is granted a single wish by a Goddess. He jokingly wishes for a Goddess of his very own and he gets exactly what he asks for.

The series is written and drawn by top Japanese artist Kosuke Fujishima and is translated by Alan Gleason and Toren Smith. Issue one ships August 30th, priced $2.50.

● As well as manga, Dark Horse is also pursuing original fantasy and science fiction concepts.

Fresh from the eight issue mini-series **Rocketman**, writer/artist Chris Moeller returns to Dark Horse with the four issue **Shadow Empires: Faith Conquers**. The first issue of this space opera based on work by author Robert Heinlein ships August 2, priced $2.95.

● The popular cult character **The Mask** has been adapted as a feature film starring Jim (*Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*) Carrey.

To coincide with its American release, Dark Horse has adapted the movie in a two issue comic series. Created and written by Dark Horse president Mike Richardson, the adaptation is drawn by Kilian Plunkett and Bruce Patterson.

The $2.50 comic series will ship fortnightly with the first issue shipping on August 9th, but Dark Horse do state that this title may be released earlier in the event of the film being brought forward. ●

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NEWS
·EUROPE·

2000AD adds free gifts

TO COINCIDE with the free gifts as part of **2000AD's** current tv promotion, new and familiar characters being new stories.

The gifts include vouchers for up to £17 for videos and computer games, redeemable at all HMV record and video shops.

There are two new Judge Dredd stories, the first in Prog 889, which is on sale now. The first takes him back to a time before Mega-City 1 existed and is by Judge Dredd creators, John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra.

There is also a new *Armoured Gideon* series by the character's creators, John Tomlinson and Simon Jacob.

Rogue Trooper returns in a new series by Steve White and Henry (**Killfrenzy**) Flint.

Mambo is a policewoman from the future with powerful psi abilities. Both story and art are by Dave Hine.

Prog 889 also sees the return of *Slaine* in a new story entitled "The Queen of the Witches", as Slaine is transported through tieme and teams up with Queen Boudicea to battle the Roman invaders.

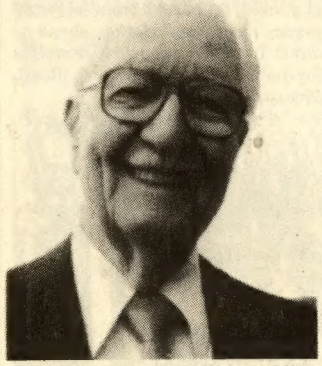
The story is written by creator Pat Mills and drawn by ex-Marvel UK artist, Dermot Power.

In Prog 891, a new John Wager Dredd serial begins with art from Mark (**Loose Cannons**) Harrison.

Fleetway has also merged its **Thunderbirds** comic with **Captain Scarlet** and **Stingray**. Priced at £1.15 the amalgamated title will include free gifts and continue to be published fortnightly.

Barks visits UK

MAGICAL Moments & Memories, the UK's only club for Disney enthusiasts is proud to announce that it has helped to secure the addition of a members-only London meeting to the 14-stop European tour of the 93 year old Disney comics veteran Carl Barks.



In addition, the club will be holding the first of many club meetings at the Cumberland Hotel in London on July 30 and 31.

For further information contact Sue Langabeer at Magical Moments & Memories, 31 Rowan Way, Exwick, Exeter, Devon EX4 2DT. Phone/fax: 0392 431653.

IN BRIEF

UK explosion?

GRAPHIC novels — and mass market trade paperbacks — are making a UK comeback.

In April, Boxtree launched its line of comicbook books with **Wolverine** (£6.99; reprinting the Claremont-Miller mini-series) and the X-Men - Ghost Rider crossover *Brood Trouble in the Big Easy* (£5.25). **X-Men: The Essential Guide** (an A4 96 page £9.99 manual by John Mosby) followed in May. These were planned to coincide with Channel 4's launch of **X-Men the Animated Series**, before the tv network removed the cartoon from its schedules.

Boxtree's current publications include compilations of Malibu's **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine** and Dark Horse's **Star Wars: Dark Empire** (£9.99), **Classic Star Wars** and Epic's **Akira** reprints.

VG Graphics (Victor Gollancz) bolsters original British graphic novel titles through this autumn's release of two new books: **Mort** (by Terry Pratchett and Graham Higgins) and **Mr Punch** (by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean).

Titan has a number of trade paperbacks scheduled including **Faces**, a collection of classic Batman stories starring Two-Face. This will tie in with the new Batman movie which features Tommy Lee Jones as Bat-villain Two-Face.

Titan is also co-publishing with DC anthologies of **Death: The High Cost of Living** and **Lois & Clark: New Adventures of Superman**.

Marvel UK revisited

STUART Bartlett has become the editor of **Overkill** from issue 50, as Marvel UK makes a new attack on newsstand buyers through an animated TV tie-in **Conan the Adventurer**. Plans are also said to be underway for an older readers' Conan title later this year.

Following the company's **Ren & Stimpy Special** and the planned **Beavis & Butt-Head** collection, Marvel UK has a reprint planned of the Jim Lee **X-Men** issues and a selection of strips from the **X-Men Adventures** series.

Still in the black

THE reports concerning the death of Blackball Comics have been greatly exaggerated, according to publisher Dave Elliot.

Beyond Mark Wheatley's **Radical Dreamer** as a three part mini-series no further ongoing series are being planned. But instead, the anthology title **Blackball Comics** is to be replaced with two one-shots in the 48 page **Monster Massacre** format: Kevin O'Neil's **John Pain** and an O'Neil-Pat Mills **Marshal Law** one shot, *Suicida*, featuring the lead character from the Gangrene Gang.

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1994

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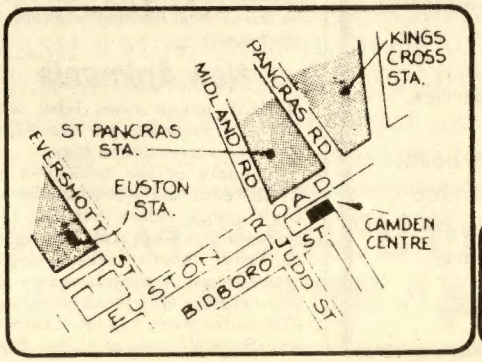

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IN BRIEF

Microcon '94

MICROCON 3 is to be held on Sunday, 26 June, between 11am and 11pm at the United Services Club, Almack Road, Clapton, London E5.

The event, in aid of the local services centre, is limited to 200 attendees and includes a disco, a Star Trek quiz, fancy dress and screenings of *Star Trek 6* in wide screen and episodes of *Deep Space Nine*, *Next Generation* and the last episode of *Next Generation*.

Registration is £5 per person and dealers tables are £5 each. Further details from Brian on 071 249 6378.

Charity comic

KEEPING alive the limited edition speculator market, Chaos City is to produce **Martha Washington Goes to War** as a special edition.

The St. Albans based publisher retailer has obtained the rights to produce two exclusive special editions of the follow up to **Give Me Liberty**. These will be in the same card cover format as Chaos City's **1963** special editions last year.

The two versions are the "Sky-Blue" Edition (limited to a only 500 print run) which will be signed by Dave Gibbons and will retail at £7.95. The "Platinum" edition is also signed by Gibbons but is limited to only a 100 print run.

Both versions will be certificated and numbered and will come in acid-free bags. Chaos City will also produce what they refer to as a "Virgin-White Edition" (limited to only 10 copies!) which will be given to any retailer who orders £500 or more of the standard editions.

Dredd's Oz

TITAN Books is releasing **The Complete Judge Dredd in Oz** on June 16th as part of its continuing compilations of **2000AD** black and white material.

The £10.99 softcover book chronicles the second meeting between Judge Dredd and Chopper, the Midnight Surfer.

Redan rewarded

The Redan Company's **Fun To Learn — Rosie and Jim** won the *Consumer Specialist Magazine of the Year* award at the Periodical Publishers Association Conference on May 3rd.

The Redan Company was formed by ex-Marvel UK managing director Robert Sutherland less than four years ago and publishes a number of **Fun To Learn** titles as well as its other nursery titles **Fireman Sam**, **SuperTed**, **Crash Dummies** and **The Trolls**.

Rosie and Jim is a comic based on the Central television children's programme.

New Animania

A NEW anime video label was officially launched at the HTC Barbican convention in May.

Animania is the brainchild of Chris Smith and will specialise in adult manga videos. Starting the ball rolling is **Guy: Awakening of the Devil**, which features the origin of the super-powered mercenary.

The video is on release from June 27th and is priced £12.99. It carries an 18 certificate and the first cassette includes the first two 35 minute stories.

Kane returns

PAUL Grist returns to his project **Kane** after a break to draw the five-part **Grendel Tales: Devil In Our Midst** series for Dark Horse.

Kane #3 is out now and retails for £1.80. The page count of the self-published title has increased to 32 from 24 and now begins a new regular bi-monthly schedule.

New small press

HOUSE Atreides Publishing is a new small press imprint with big intentions. Its first release **Rogue's Warriors** debuts in June and is written by publisher Darren Smithson and drawn by Pete Dixon. The comic will cost £1.60.

HAP follows the launch of its first title with **The Amazon**, a spin-off from **Rogue's Warriors**. Again written by Smithson, it is drawn by Steve Ince.

The back up strip in **The Amazon** is *MageWorks* by Julian Eales and Kelvin Cox.

General enquiries to Darren Smithson on 0734 868271.

Bonafide launch

AS mainstream publishing continues to retract, so small press continues to expand.

Bonafide is a professionally produced quarterly anthology title including small press creators such as Jerry Holliday, Luke Fay and Nick Walker. Issue zero is currently available for £1.80 from selected comic, record and clothes shops or direct from the publisher, Bonafide Productions, 23, Albany Road, Montpelier, Bristol.

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Bad boys, the law and graphic storytelling

IN MARCH of 1993 I was lucky enough to be spending some time with in Lancashire with Bryan Talbot and a young comic book artist called John Coulthart. There, after a meeting of the Preston SF group, I was treated to an advanced look at two dozen pages of the most incredible artwork ever to grace a comic's pages, set to appear in Savoy's title **Lord Horror** as a storyline called *Reverbstorm*.

At the time Dave Britton, the comic's writer, was about to be sent to jail for four months following the obscenity case against **Lord Horror** — the novel — and the spin-off comic, **Meng and Ecker**. To the best of my knowledge, **Meng and Ecker** is the only comic (so far) to be banned as obscene. The decision on the novel was overturned after Savoy's case was appealed by Geoffrey Robertson QC of the international freedom group Article 19. However the ban was not lifted on **Meng and Ecker #1**. Britton ended up serving two months of his sentence and was released on June 2nd, 1993. Manchester police still have over 4000 issues of various Savoy titles and cases are pending.

Reverbstorm, published on 23rd May, may be the next in line to suffer the attentions of the Manchester police in what has become an almost regular event — the raiding of Savoy's premises. Yet **Reverbstorm** contains some of the finest, most intricate, complex and downright beautiful art and prose I've ever seen seen. Coulthart's art, like Britton's writing, is a surrealistic high of stunning originality, depth and purpose. The sheer love and *passion* of these men is evident on every page, and Britton's words, spoken aloud are as stirring as they are startling.

Censorship isn't exactly unknown in the field of comics. Many titles, such as **Faust** and **Omaha the Cat Dancer**, rarely make their way into Britain, to the sales detriment of the creators. But when censored versions of comics do appear, they are slashed more brutally than a health service budget. For example, Heavy Metal's printing of Serpieri's *Carnivora* featured the complete deletion of four pages, meaningless scribbling over the gorgeous art, the cutting and whiting out of portions of panels, and the changing of dialogue which, if anything, made the story more obscene, not less. None of these "amendments" make any sense whatsoever.

Neither does censorship in general, and the Obscene Publications Act in particular.

Consider for a moment the apparent contradictions inherent in a law which says, on the one hand, that you may *indulge in* sex from the age of sixteen, but that you may not see, watch *or even listen to* sexual acts. A law which says you achieve the age of majority at 18, becoming adult and able to vote, but that you are too immature to make up your own mind how much sex and/or violence you wish to experience in various entertainment media. The result: you get David Alton pushing through a draconian bill to police the censors themselves, forcing them to make more cuts in films or perhaps denying them certification at all. You get educational material being withdrawn from sex education biology classes and the muzzling of the teachers themselves!

The fact is that the sex 'n' violence genie is well and truly out of the bottle, and it won't go away no matter how hard it's pushed. What is needed is more education, not less, and the ability to explore the subjects freely in order to come to terms with them. But what damage will it do society to allow the censorship to continue unchecked?

Apologists for censorship are fond of quoting psychological studies that appear to support a link between obscene material and various violent crimes, including rape, whilst conveniently ignoring the large body of evidence that suggests that the very same material provides a safety valve for many people, allowing them to enjoy acts vicariously that we would never wish them to practise in real life. And all psychologists forever warn *individuals* of the danger of suppressing desires in their minds, rather than coming to terms with them before they explode into anti-social behaviour. Yet, how much larger must the danger be if an entire *society* sublimates and represses its own sexual and violent desires?

And it is important for comics readers, since so many of you are young, to decide where you stand on these issues, because over the next few years you will be forming the society that you are going to live in for the rest of your life.

There's a storm coming. A *Reverbstorm*. Issue 1 (**Lord Horror #8**) is available now, quarterly, for £3.50 with a free CD single in the first 1000 copies (20 minutes of interesting music) and it is planned there will be another CD free with part 8 (**Lord Horror #15**). If your comic shop is too wussy to stock the title, then try writing direct to Savoy Comics at 279 Deansgate, Manchester M3 4EW to order your copy (I suspect £1 for postage would be appreciated -- the guys aren't exactly rolling in money right now, trials are expensive!). In the meantime, I wish Savoy every success in recovering their seized stock, and hope they go on publishing far into the future.

*Tony Chester is the internationally selling author of the novels **Best Friend** (horror) and **Heart** (SF), and co-publisher/co-editor of the award-winning international SF fanzine, **Concatenation**.*

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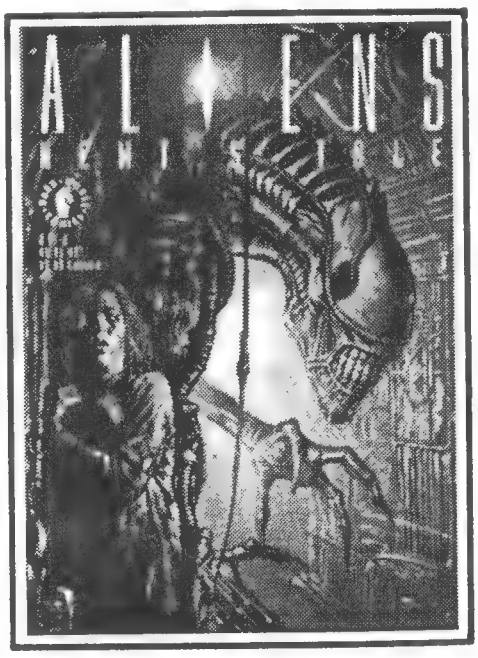

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MAJOR DIGRESSIONS

Game, set and match: 1 (of 1)

Peter David, writer of comics, paperbacks, film scripts and stuff, contributes a weekly column, "But I Digress" to US trade paper ***The Comic Buyer's Guide****. In addition to appearing monthly in* ***Comics International****, his columns have been compiled by Krause Publications into a 258 page paperback, now available in all good comic shops.*

WHAT'S THAT you say?

You're publishing a magazine that's not burning up the sales charts? People aren't talking about you? You want people to notice you, and you'll do whatever it takes — so long as you stay *juuuust* this side of a libel action?

My friends, the answer is simple: *controversy*.

Nothing will goose sales and scoop up pay dirt for the old ego-scan (looking through publications, to see your name) like generating a good old-fashioned controversy. And if you're willing to do whatever it takes, why you can generate a *big* controversy. Maybe (even better) — a *long-term* controversy.

Here's how you do it: APF. Attack Public Figures.

It's easy. Anyone can do it. How, you ask?

1. Turn a blind eye to common sense or —

2. — Fabricate.

That's all it takes. And, since a public figure is usually someone who has a reputation he or she cares about defending and will probably feel it necessary to respond — why, you can get months, even years, of valuable circulation boosting.

I will now endeavour to give you a primer in just how it's done, as displayed by the absolute master of the form, Gary Groth.

In the **Comics Journal** #165, a letter appears in the editorial page entitled *Peter's (Lack of) Principle*. Headlined *A Letter From Peter David*, the letter takes Groth to task for Fantagraphics' public excoriation of a former employee, one Carole Sobocinski. Groth then spends a page and a half tearing the letter, and me, to shreds, labelling me a "mainstream hack", a "know-nothing, busy-body", "paranoid" and "hypocritical". While boasting about the **Journal**'s history of "comprehensive investigative and advocacy journalism," he also takes random and gratuitous slams at: **Comics Buyer's Guide**; computer nets and the "ignoramuses" who frequent them; Harlan Ellison; and Max Allan Collins (misspelling his name).

Now...

I didn't write the letter.

It was a fraud. A complete and utter phoney.

Since I don't read the **Journal**, it took one of the alleged computer "ignoramuses" to bring it to my attention — the aforementioned "ignoramus" being able to discern what Groth (who compared his journalistic principles to that of the **Washington Post**) did not or would not: namely, that the letter was a fake.

Upon getting my hands on it subsequently, I called Fantagraphics and blew up at them over the phone (regrettably losing control and cursing at the hapless secretary who knew nothing about any of it). More than four hours later, I received a faxed copy of the "original" (produced on a letterhead that had my name, address and phone number on it, although it looked nothing like my real letterhead, nor was the signature mine) plus the Fantagraphics Rolodex card with my name and address on it to "prove" that they had no reason to doubt the letter's authenticity.

Now, there's one of two possibilities here.

- Either Groth or someone else at Fantagraphics fabricated the letter.
- Or else he received it from someone else and desperately ignored every warning sign of its bogus nature. (And, no, despite what several people have opined, it was categorically *not* manufactured by Todd McFarlane or anyone from Image. Don't start getting distracted by trying to guess outside sources. There are *no* outside sources here. You see, there's evidence I haven't told you yet, but, like any good mystery, these things must be developed.)

I will endeavour to try to produce Shinola from you-know-what and use this as a teaching sample for those of you out there who would follow Groth's example for generating conflict.

Let's examine the two options, in reverse order:

A. *The Letter Came From Someone Else.*

The moment a letter arrived purporting to be from me, warning bells should have gone off at Fantagraphics. Because, you see, it was no secret there that I would have nothing to do with Fantagraphics — not since Groth's savaging of Carol Kalish after her death years ago. Up until that time, relations between myself and Groth had been strained — and even then I wouldn't associate with the **Journal** — but I had nevertheless just written an article about The Hulk for **Amazing Heroes**, at that time one of Fantagraphics' more innocuous publications.

The Kalish editorial hit, and, when the editors from **AH** called about arranging payment, I told them I would never take a dime of

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Groth's money. I didn't want to know from him. Several times in subsequent months, **Journal** reporters would call me about something or other, and I reiterated my personal little boycott of Fantagraphics.

So it was unlikely I would break that boycott in order to defend Carole Sobocinski, a casual momentary acquaintance at best, particularly considering that (since I didn't want to roll around in Groth's sty) I didn't write in to defend long-time friend and mentor Kalish.

Groth ignored that.

The letterhead featured a piece of artwork: an illustration of the Hulk by Todd McFarlane. Now, how many people out there *really* think I'd be displaying artwork from Todd on my personal letterhead?

Groth ignored that.

The opening paragraph stated, "It's been a while since I actually wrote the 'esteemed' **Comics Journal**." Yes, a long while. I don't recall *ever* writing to it, to be precise.

Groth ignored that.

"What in Christ's name are you folks thinking?" the letter demands. "What in Christ's name," a phrase sounding questionable coming from your humble Jew. Oh, I'll cop to an astonished "Jesus" perhaps. But swearing in Christ's name in print? Uh uh. Too gentile.

Groth ignored that.

The letter accused him of going after Sobocinski because of her gender. Since Groth has proven himself capable of assailing people whether they're male or female, young or old, living or dead, I would be most unlikely to make that charge.

Groth ignored that.

"My" letter takes a potshot at the Eros line — an odd comment from the creator of the sexually explicit — and in some towns, perhaps even pornographic — **Sachs and Violens**.

Groth ignored that.

In his own rebuttal, Groth made mention of how I hang out on Compuserve and that pros had been gossiping maliciously about the entire Sobocinski imbroglio. Groth stated he read it all. However, in all of that chatter, my entire contribution to the discussion consisted of precisely one bored message to the effect of "Who cares?" That would seem to indicate that I would be the *least* likely person to write to the **Journal**.

Groth ignored that.

The letter had no logical structure.

Groth didn't ignore that; he teed off on it (often times displaying comparable gaps in argumentation — for example, citing *ad ignorantium* arguments on "my" part while, at the same time, indulging in equally irrelevant *ad hominem* attacks himself) while never asking the one question that would have made sense: Did Peter David really write this?

He sure didn't ask *me*.

The Master of Investigative Journalism made no attempt to verify this snowball's-chance-in-Hell letter. In that same issue, **Comics Journal** boasted of phoning a California retailer six times to try to ascertain whether he really sold 2400 copies of **Wizard**. I see. *That* they had time for. But trying to check the veracity of a badly written letter purportedly from someone who makes a point of never writing to them — *that* they didn't do.

Why? Probably because Groth didn't want to. Truth was a distant second to Groth's agenda.

Why should Groth have suspected someone might perpetuate a fraud? Well, Groth himself claims that the **Journal** was sabotaged at one point — that professionals and the legendary "Vastator" are out to get him. Would one expect, then, total paranoia from Groth? No. But normal caution would seem to be dictated.

But why display caution, when the results of "blissful ignorance" might be more sales?

Then again, it's all moot, if we go with the alternative option. Namely:

B *Groth or Someone Else at Fantagraphics Manufactured It.*

"That's a serious charge!" you say. "First, what evidence do you have?"

Well, I have the following evidence (and it's the reason I suggest it was an inside job, rather than a concoction of any of my "obvious" opponents.):

The Rolodex card that Fantagraphics sent me as "proof" had a conspicuous and unlikely typing error in my address.

The bogus letterhead had the exact same typo.

Whoever manufactured it used the Fantagraphics Rolodex to do so.

But why? Why would Groth fabricate a letter just to attack me?

Well, here's a curious bit of timing. This issue of **Comics Journal** saw print over a month after I ran a column entitled *Friends of Ellison* in my *But I Digress* column in **Comic Buyer's Guide**. For those of you who don't read that column, it was one where I formed a club in response to the *Enemies of Ellison*, a group of cowards who banded together anonymously (at first) to launch an organised attack on Harlan Ellison. (They subsequently renamed themselves *Victims of Ellison*, presumably to make themselves sound more pathetic — not realising just how pathetic they sounded to begin with.)

Now, granted, one has to allow for the **Journal's** production time. But a two page editorial can easily be stripped in at the last minute, and, if Groth wanted to take immediate action to discredit and attack me, this was the best way to do it. And the timing was pretty amazing.

What's the connection, you ask? That's easy.

Gary Groth is one of the *Victims of Ellison*. He's named as one of the founding members in *VOE*'s first

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published newsletter. Hard to believe. Groth is either a careless journalist or else an inventive fiction writer masquerading as a careless journalist. There's no up side here. It's like the old *Daily Bugle* headline: "Spider-Man... Threat or Menace?" Small wonder Groth and Ellison don't exactly get along. Personally, I'm astounded — I mean, who *couldn't* love a guy with such admirable traits?

Now, we've got opportunity and motive. Unfortunately, this isn't a criminal case; it's civil (so to speak).

Of course, Groth might claim that it was a disgruntled former employee who used the Fantagraphics Rolodex card. Judging by previous issues of the **Journal**, he would probably finger Sobocinski.

What's the likelihood? Well, let's see: All I know about Groth is that he spews bile at every opportunity and helps organise anonymous slam groups (until forced into the open).

All I know about Sobocinski is that Groth doesn't like her. Also keep in mind that for her to gain any benefit from doing such a thing would require so many events to have fallen perfectly into place — well, Carole Sobocinski would have to be one of the most cunning criminal masterminds since Professor Moriarty to foresee it all.

Whereas for Gary Groth to benefit, he merely had to act like a creep.

But (you ask in astonishment) would Groth be that *stupid* ? To fake a letter so that he then has to apologise and look foolish?

So what? So he'll look foolish for a brief time. In the foolish category, he'll simply join the ranks of Harlan Ellison and Dave Sim, who have both been publicly embarrassed by false letters in the past. This "foolishness" is outweighed by the benefits: unloading on me for an issue, getting attention, and — best of all — gaining that valuable issue-selling controversy.

Admit it: How many of you are reading this column right now and saying "Wow, I gotta check this issue out and see what Peter David is talking about!"

But, but (you say, seeking final proof to refute the notion that anyone could be that duplicitous) why would Groth leave himself exposed to legal action? Hah! Answer that, David! You could sue him and he could lose everything!

No.

I can't sue him.

And he knows it. Believe me, no one is more aware of just how far one can push First Ammendment protection.

Groth is completely shielded. He can even manufacture a letter from me and get away with it. Oh, I could get an action going, sure. Maybe even survive a motion to dismiss. But after many long years — and issue after issue of **Comics Journal** with Groth milking it for all it's worth — I would, ultimately, lose.

And here's the delicious irony of why I would lose — the simple fact which is both Gary Groth's greatest buffer and his greatest frustration:

He's not important enough.

He doesn't rate. He's irrelevant. He's just a cess in the pool, a carp in the diem, a cockroach in the Grand Hotel of Comics. As far as the law is concerned, *he's too insignificant to hurt me*. That is, to hurt me in the only way in which civil procedure recognises, namely monetarily.

Nothing he writes about me in **Comics Journal** can damage me financially, because no one in the industry who has the power to hire or fire gives a damn what he says. Oh, they might read the bogus letter and think, "Boy, Peter wrote a really stupid letter," but that's quickly attended to with this column and Groth's retraction in the next issue of **Journal**. And there's nothing that Groth can say that will make me lose **Incredible Hulk**. I won't forfeit any novel deals or any movie script assignments because of his diatribes.

He has no power over me.

The only thing he *can* do is get attention for himself, which is what this instalment of *Major Digressions* provides. Perhaps I should not have indulged myself, since, ultimately, it gives him what he wants. But I couldn't help it; I suppose this edition of *Major Digressions* is the print equivalent of slowing down and staring in wonderment at a burning factory or a jack-knifed tractor trailer.

If Groth wants an ongoing feud, he won't get one. This is the first time I've mentioned him in any prominent way in almost four years of writing columns and it will be the last. I will continue not writing to **Comics Journal** (aside from one, terse, "for the record" letter stating I didn't write the one in his editorial). Of course, he can just fabricate letters from me with impunity. He can attribute to me whatever he wants, knowing all the while that I won't go after him legally — and having it gnaw at him *why* I won't. Because when all is said and done, his opinions of me (or anyone, for that matter) simply don't count.

And that, my friends, is how to generate a controversy, sell additional copies of your magazine — and know, deep inside, that you are a total sham.

Class dismissed. © Peter David, 1994

*(Peter David, writer of stuff, suggests that anyone who was considering countering the above with "Well, **you** never check anything," not embarrass himself by doing so. First, despite the claims to the contrary by some, I do, in fact, check things. Plenty of things. Particularly the outrageous things. And, more often than not, they're unfounded, so I never write about them and you guys never know. Second, there's a world of difference between writing an opinion piece based on publicly disseminated for-the-record interviews and basing a piece on a bizarre and unlikely letter. The former is legitimate; the latter is slipshod.)*

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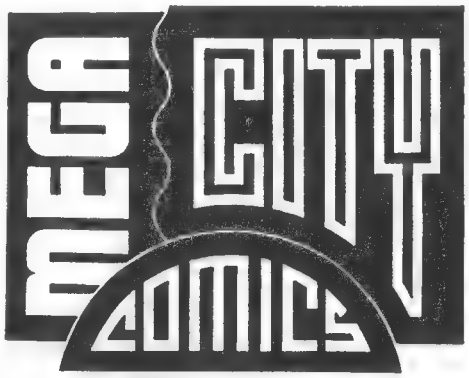

BACK-ISSUE BONANZA

MARVEL

ASTONISHING TALES
25 VG £9.50
26 VF/NM £12.50
27 FN/VFN £7.50
27 VFN £9.95
28 VFN £9.95
29 VFN £9.95
32 VF/NM £6
34 VF/NM £6
35 VF/NM £6

AVENGERS
Annual 7 VG £6
2 VG £80
12 FN/VFN £33
14 FN/VFN £28
18 FN/VFN £30
21 VFN £18
22 FN/VFN £15
24 FN £9.50
28 FN+ £12
32 VFN £9
45 fn/vfn £6.75
52 FN+ £6.25
57 VG £10
66 FN £4.95
123 VF/NM £6
135 VF/NM £6.50
135 VFN £5.95
146 VF/NM £4.50
149 VF/NM £4.50
180 ..... £1.75
184,185 Byrne ... £1.95
188-191 Byrne ... £1.75
194,195,201-203 . £1.50
205 ..... £1.75
206,231,233 .... £1.50
235,239-242 .... £1.50
245-248 ..... £1.50
250 GS £1.75
259-261,265 .... £1.25
267,270-275 .... £1.00
277-280,284,286 . £1.00
289,296,298,301 . £1.00
303-311,313-325 . £0.95
326 1st Rage £2.50
327 Rage £1.25
330-333 ..... £0.95
335-345,348-359 . £0.95
363 Foil cover £2.25
364,366 ..... £0.95

CAPTAIN AMERICA
ANNUAL 8 NM £15
ANNUAL 8 FN ... £9.50
100 VG £45
100 VG/FN £70
101 G £6.50
101 FN £28
102 VFN £21
102 FN £12.50
102 VG £6.50
103 FN £13
104 VF/NM £25
104 FN/VFN £16
104 G/VG £6.50
105 VG £6.50
105 FN £13
105 VFN £15
106 VG £7
106 VF/NM £25
107 FN £12.50
108 VG £7
108 FN/VFN £14
110 G/VG £6.50
110 FN £15
111 FN £18
112 FN/VFN £9
115 FN £6.50
118 VF/NM £10
120 FN £6
121 VF/NM £6
127 VFN £4.95
137 VF/NM £6
138 VFN £5.50
141 VF/NM £6
146 VF/NM £2.95
161 FN/VFN £2.60
161 VF/NM £3.25
164 VFN £2.95
165 VFN £2.95
166 VFN £2.95
167 VFN £2.95
168 VFN £2.95
170 VFN £2.95
171 VFN £2.95
173 VF/NM £5.50
177 VF/NM £3.25
178 VF/NM £3.25
179 VF/NM £3.25
185 VF/NM £1.95
186 VF/NM £1.95
189 VF/NM £1.95

DAREDEVIL
2 VG £75
2 VG+ £85
7 VG £26
7 FN £28
8 FN/VFN £28
9 FN/VFN £27
10 FN £24
10 VG £16
11 VG- £11
12 VFN £29
13 FN £21
13 VG £9
14 VG/FN £12
14 VG £10
15 FN £16
18 FN/VFN £15
19 VG £7
20 FN £13
25 VG/FN £7.95
26 VFN £13.50
27 FN £12
28 VF/NM £14
32 FN £8.50
33 VFN £10
35 VF/NM £12
36 VFN £10
37 FN £7.50
38 FN £6
41 FN £5.50
42 VF/NM £9.50
43 VF/NM £9.50
44 VFN £8.50
45 FN/VFN £7
46 VFN £8.50
47 VFN £8.50
48 FN/VFN £7.50
50 FN £7.50
50 VFN £8.50
51 FN £6
51 FN £7.50
61 FN £2.95
62 FN £2.95
66 VFN £3.95
70 VFN £3.95
109 ..... £3.95
175 Miller £3.50
179,180 Miller ... £2.95
185-187 Miller ... £1.95
190 GS,Miller £2.50
194,195,202-205 . £1.25
211,216,218 .... £1.25
219 Miller script .. £1.50
223 ..... £1.50
226 Miller script .. £2.95
230 Miller/Maz ... £1.95
235,247 ..... £0.95
236 Barry Smith .. £1.00
237,240,242,245 . £0.95
251 ..... £1.50
252 GS,Fall Mut .. £1.95
257 VF/NM £12.50
258 Ron Lim £1.00
263-269,273,274 . £0.95
277-287,289,294 . £0.95
295 ..... £1.25
301-309,311-317 . £0.95
KING SIZE 1 VG £6

DR.STRANGE VOL.1
169 FN £30
169 FN/VFN £36
170 VF/NM £16
171 VFN £14
171 FN £9.50
172 VFN £14
173 VFN/NM £16
173 FN/VFN £11
174 VFN £14
175 VFN/NM £16
176 VFN+ £15
177 VG/FN £6.50
177 FN £9.50
178 VFN/NM £15
180 VFN £13.50
181 VFN £13.50
182 FN/VFN £9.50
183 FN £9.50
183 VF/NM £15

EXCALIBUR
7-10 ..... £1.95
11-19 ..... £1.50
20-37,59-70 ..... £1.30

FANTASTIC FOUR
Annual 3 VF/NM £30
Annual 5 VG- £10
Annual 6 VG/FN £7
8 VG+ £110
20 VG £38
21 G £15
22 VG £18
25 VG £60
26 G/VG £48
28 G/VG £20
29 FN £20
(3/4" high felt-tip 'S' on cover)
30 FN £20
(3/4" high felt-tip 'S' on cover)
37 VFN £32
38 VG £11
38 FN £15
41 FN/VFN £15
42 FN £13
43 FN/VFN £14
44 FN £11
45 VG £6.50
46 VG £9
47 VG/FN £7.50
47 VFN £23
49 G/VG £18
50 G £15
51 VG/FN £9
51 FN £10
51 VFN £19.50
52 G £5.50
52 VG/FN £15
52 FN/VFN £26
52 VFN £30
53 VG/FN £11
53 VF/FN £12
54 G £4.95
55 FN £12
56 VFN £23
58 VG- £6.50
60 G £4.50
60 G/VG £6
60 VF/NM £23
61 G/VG £4.50
61 VG £6
61 VFN £11
62 G/VG £4.50
62 VFN £11
62 VF/NM £16
63 G/VG £4
63 VG £4.95
63 VG/FN £6
63 VF/NM £16
64 G/VG £4
64 VG £4.95
64 FN/VFN £10
64 VFN £14
65 FN £9
65 VFN £11
66 VG- £12.95
66 VG/FN £23
66 FN/VFN £30
67 VG £15
67 VG/FN £20
67 VFN £39

FANTASTIC FOUR
68 VG/FN £6.50
68 FN £8.50
(creased cover)
69 FN/VFN £9.50
69 VF/NM £16
70 G/VG £4
70 FN £7.50
71 FN/VFN £8.50
72 FN £6.50
72 VFN £11
73 VG £3.95
74 VG/FN £4.95
74 FN £7
75 VG/FN £4.95
75 FN (loose centre) .. £6
76 VG/FN £4.95
78 FN £6.50
78 VFN £8.50
78 VF/NM £10
79 FN £7.50
79 VF/NM £10
81 FN/VFN £6.50
82 FN/VFN £8.50
83 FN/VFN £8.50
86 VFN £7.50
87 FN £5.25
87 FN/VFN £8
87 VF/NM £8
88 VFN £8
93 VFN £6.50
95 FN £3.95
102 VF/NM £8
106 FN/VFN £4.95
108 FN/VFN £4.95
109 VFN £4.50
109 VF/NM £5
110 VFN £5.95
123 VFN £6
146 ..... £2.50
176 ..... £1.95
209,215-217,220 . £1.95
227,228 ..... £1.00
237 Byrne £1.50
246,248 Byrne ... £1.50
258,272 Byrne ... £1.00
282 LD,Byrne £1.25
294-295 ..... £0.95
296 part B.W.Smith £1.25
297-301,304 .... £0.95
306-308,315 .... £0.95
319 GS £1.00
320-325 ..... £0.95
326-332,337 .... £0.95
338,342,343 Simsn £0.95
355-357 ..... £0.95
358 GS,Anniver .. £1.75
363-365 ..... £0.95
366-368,370 .... £0.95
375 GS, Foil cover £2.00

GHOST RIDER VOL.2
2 VF/NM £9.50
5 VF/NM £8

HULK
King size special 1 FN £8
King size special 2 VG £6

HULK
102 FN+ £50
106 VFN £15
107 FN/VFN £15
122 FN £5.95
340 VG/FN £9
340 FN £12
367 FN £5.50
372 VF/NM £7.50
377 VFN £8.50

IRON MAN
1 FN £105
1 VFN £125
2 VG £18
2 VFN £48
3 VG £14
3 VFN £36
4 VG £8.50
4 FN £15
5 VG £8.50
5 FN/VFN £20
7 VG £8
7 VFN £18
7 VF/NM £20
8 VG £8
8 VFN £16
9 VF/NM £18
10 VF/NM £16
11 VG £6
11 FN/VFN £14
12 VG £6
12 VG/FN £8
13 VG £6
13 FN £12
14 VG £6
15 VG £6
15 VF/NM £14
16 VG/FN £4.95
16 VG/FN £4.95
17 VFN £8.50
18 FN £6
18 VFN £8.50
19 VG/FN £4.95
20 VG/FN £4.95
20 FN £6
21 FN/VFN £4.95
21 VFN £6.50
22 FN £6
23 FN £6
24 FN/VFN £7.50
25 VG/FN £4.95
25 FN £4.95
26 VFN £6.50
27 VFN £6.50
28 VFN £7
29 VFN £7
30 FN £6
34 VFN £7
36 FN £6
37 FN £6
39 VG/FN £4.95
40 VFN £7
41 VFN £7
42 FN £6
43 FN £4.95
45 VFN £4.95
53 VF/NM £4.95

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1 VG/FN £30
1 VG £28

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72 VF/NM £2.95

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MARVEL SUPERHEROES
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14 FN £28
14 FN/VFN £36
16 VG £16
68 FN/VFN £12.50

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(Byrne X-Men)

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(1st printing)
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96 VFN £4.95
New Mutants Special Edition VF/NM £4.95

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3 VFN £13
9 FN £1.95
13 VF/NM £2.95

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PUNISHER
Annual 1 VFN £5.50

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2 FN £32
4 FN £99
(small nick in edge of cover, small piece of tape on spine)
6 FN+ £18
6 FN/VFN £24
7 VG £14
9 FN £16
10 FN/VFN £16
11 FN £11
13 VFN £14
15 VG/FN £14
17 FN £11

SGT.FURY
ANNUAL 1 VG/FN . £8.50
ANNUAL 2 FN- £7
8 VFN £24
9 G £4.95
10 VFN+ £28
16 VF/NM £19
18 VFN £17
19 VFN+ £18
20 VG+ £8.50
28 FN- £6.50

AMAZING SPIDERMAN
Special 3 FN £12
Special 3 VG £7
Annual 2 VG £28
Annual 15 VF/NM ... £10
Annual 15 VFN £9
Annual 23 VF/NM . £3.95
Giant-Size 4 VF/NM .. £40
4 VG/FN £175
(Marvel chipping from top to mid-way down open edge of cover, 1/4" tippex obscuring cover date, otherwise nice flat fairly clean copy).
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9 VG/FN £110
12 FN/VFN £90
15 FN+ £110
16 FN £75
17 VG £90
(2nd app Goblin)
19 FN- £60
24 VG £24
28 G/VG £32
30 VG £24
31 FN/VFN £32
33 Marvel chipping .. £32
34 VG £20
35 G £9.50
35 VG £18
36 VG £17.50
(Bookshop stamp on cover)
36 FN/VFN £32
37 G/VG £15
37 VG £20
39 VFN £50
41 G £10
42 VG/FN £23
44 FN £16
44 VG £9.95
45 FN £14.50
(pence priced)
45 FN £15
(small biro name on cover/cents priced)
46 VG £10
48 VG/FN £11
49 VFN- £24
51 VG/FN £20
52 VG/FN £12.50
53 VG £7
53 VFN £20
54 VG/FN £12
57 VG £8.95
(bookshop stamp on cover)
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63 VG £6.95
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76 FN £7.50
77 FN £7.50
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88 FN £7.50
89 VFN £13
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117 VG/FN £3.95
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126 VFN £7.95
126 FN/VFN £6
128 VG £3.50
130 FN/VFN £3.95
133 FN/VFN £3.95
134 FN £5.95
135 VG £12.95
(Punisher)
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140 FN £3.95
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155 VFN £4.95
157 VFN £4.95
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309 VF/NM £4.95
310 VFN £4.25
311 VF/NM £4.95
312 VFN £7.95
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121 G/VG £6.50
121 VG £7.50
121 FN £12
121 FN+ £13
123 VG/FN £13
124 VG £7.50
125 VG £7.50
128 G/VG £6
129 FN £14
130 VG £8
130 VFN £13
131 FN- £11
131 FN £12
131 VFN £16
132 FN £14
132 FN/VF £15
133 VG £6.50
133 FN- £11
134 VG £5.50
134 FN/VF £13
136 FN £7
140 VF/NM £8.50
142 VG £4.25
143 FN £7.50
144 FN £7.50
145 VG £4.25
147 VF/NM £12
148 VG £6
149 VFN £12.50
151 FN £9.75
152 FN £7.95
153 FN £7.95
154 FN £7.95
155 VG/FN £4.95
156 VF/NM £12
158 VFN £9.95
159 FN £8.50
162 VF/NM £9.50
162 NM £11
164 VF/NM £8.50
166 VF/NM £8.50
168 VFN £8.50

TALES OF SUSPENSE
42 G/VG £36
43 VG/FN £55
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45 G/VG £25
47 VG+ £29
48 VG+ £28
48 VG/FN £40
(nice white pages!)
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50 G £10
50 VG £16
51 VG/FN £12
52 FN £26
53 G £8
55 G/VG £6.50
56 poor £2.95
58 VG/FN £35
63 G/VG £10
64 VFN £20
64 VG+ £9
66 VG £8.95
67 VFN £15
68 FN/VFN £15
69 VG+ £6.50
70 VFN+ £15
71 FN+ £12
72 FN £7
73 FN £8.50

TALES TO ASTONISH
36 G/VG £22
45 VG/FN £20
47 VG £9.50
56 FN+ £22
56 VG £6.50
58 FN £12.50
59 G/VG £12
65 VG/FN £6
66 FN/VFN £12.50
67 VG £7.50
67 FN £10
68 VG £5.50
69 VG/FN £9.50
69 FN/VFN £12.50
73 VF/NM £18
74 FN/VFN £10
75 FN £6.50
75 VF/NM £14
76 VFN £12.50
77 VFN £13
78 VFN £12.50
79 VFN £12.50
81 VF/NM £14
82 VF/NM £18
83 VG £7
83 VFN £12.50
84 FN £6.50
84 VF/NM £13
85 VF/NM £12.50
85 FN £6.50
87 FN £7.50
87 FN/VFN £8.50
87 VF/NM £14
88 VF/NM £14
89 VFN £12.50
90 VG £6
90 FN/VFN £8.50
91 VFN £12.50
92 VFN £13
94 VF/NM £13
95 FN/VFN £8.50
95 VFN £13
96 FN/VFN £8.50
96 VF/NM £14
97 FN/VFN £8.50
97 VF/NM £14
98 VFN £12.50
99 FN/VFN £8.50
100 FN/VFN £16
101 VFN £12

THOR
(JOURNEY into MYSTERY)
100 G £10
101 G £8
120 VG £12.50
122 VG £12
124 VG £12.50
125 FN £17
127 FN £14
128 FN £14
129 VFN £23
130 FN £9.50
131 VFN £23
132 VF/NM £25
132 FN £9.50
133 FN £14
134 FN £18
135 FN+ £15
135 VFN+ £23
136 VG £8.50
137 VFN £24
146 VFN £7
149 VF/NM £16
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7 VG/FN £24
8 VG/FN £35
10 VG+ £32
10 FN+ £50
11 G £12.50
11 G/VG £14
12 FN £42
12 FN/VFN £55
13 VG £25
13 VG/FN £27
14 FN/VF £38
15 VG £22
15 FN £28
17 FN £22
18 VG/FN £15
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20 VG £14
20 VG- £12
(staples off centre)
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MEDIAFILE

Associate editor Sarah Bolesworth looks at recent media coverage of comics and related product

IN **THE Times**' *Weekend* section (21.5.94) reporter Kevin Eason announced the sale of three Alfa Romeo BATs, [illegible] the headline "Out of this world: the $4 million Batmobiles".

The cars, made in 1953, were conceived by aircraft designer Franco Scaglione, and caused a sensation when they were shown at that year's Turin motor show.

But **Times** contributor Kevin Eason seemed to have trouble identifying with something that the headline-writers on the paper recognised immediately as a Batmobile. So he began his feature with a description of the cars parked up in a Kensington mews, saying: "Perhaps Dan Dare was hiding around the corner, beamed to the 20th century to save Earth from the Mekons. These cars look like refugees from **The Eagle** comic."

This is pretty poor stuff. Why (oh *why*, Kevin) do we have to do this every time comics are mentioned. Why is British media so ignorant of comics that its immediate reaction is to talk either about the **Beano** or **The Eagle**?

And hasn't Eason seen the *Batman* films, or any of the marketing associated with the character? Or perhaps he thought that it would work better as a **Times** story if he mentioned **The Eagle**. But even if his motive is partisan, it's still sad: it just doesn't work to talk about **The Eagle** when you've a picture of a Batmobile taking up a third of the page area.

And if there are any Bat-heads out there with $4 million to spare, Coys of Kensington will be selling the cars at auction at Silverstone racetrack in Northamptonshire, on July 30.

Asterix conquers America

The Sunday Times reported (5.6.94) that, after selling some 200 million books in 20 languages, Albert Uderzo — the creator of Gallic hero Asterix — is finally to retire.

At 67, Uderzo confesses himself too exhausted to continue with Asterix. "I lived solely in front of a drawing board, and I know nothing of life. Now I'm going to devote myself to doing nothing."

Despite his phenomenal international success, the one market which has remained resistant to Asterix's charms is the United States.

But Asterix marketers plan one final assault on the States, with the cheekily-entitled $10 million film, *Asterix Conquers America*. American media may show some interest — after all, the Parc Asterix, based not a million miles from the black hole of EuroDisney, is booming.

Imagine a scenario where, in some pristine dry-out style LA office, spin-doctors sit around a table discussing how in hell to staunch the haemorrhaging wound that is Euro Disney. "I know," says one, "Let's take Asterix into like, the American *zeitgeist*, repackage him and then *sell* him back to the French; we could do Asterix *paintball*, Asterix *adventure holidays*... but in a *Disney* context..."

Reflections on Asterix

Sadly, the **Mirror**'s weekend supplement for kids, *Mega Mirror*, went to production with its Asterix promotion, "Asterix's Party", some two weeks (21.5.94) before the announcement of Uderzo's retirement.

Using Asterix's 25th anniversary as a hook, the Mirror launched its competition (prize: trip to Asterix Parc and a full set of Asterix books) to plug into Asterix's "thousands of dedicated followers". Whether those thousands are the same kids likely to be reading *Mega Mirror* remains to be seen, of course.

And using Asterix as the focus of a drive for readership two weeks before the retirement of the character's creator is like the **Sunday Mirror** running a full profile of Nirvana singer Kirt Cobain *a week after the star's death* — which, of course, is exactly what the **Sunday Mirror** magazine *did* do.

Frisson de Mirror

But of all the ill-judged moves at the **Mirror** of late,. the launch of its costumed hero has to be the most cringeworthy.

Thinking it appropriate to have a cartoon mascot hosting the pages of *Mega Mirror* ("Classified: These pages are 4 kids' eyes only), the editorial/marketing team introduced CANARYMAN, a fat, anthropomorphic bird in superhero drag.

Why Canaryman, you may ask. Well, since David Montgomery took over the **Mirror**, Mirror Group Newspapers has moved from its old offices in Holborn Circus (just adjoining Fleet Street) and, like all the other newspapers, moved out to cheap 'n' cheerless docklands.

What's the docklands building they couldn't let for love nor money; the one they couldn't persuade senior DSS civil servants to work in; the one that Ogilvy and York (one of the biggest property empires in the world) nearly lost its shirt over? You know, the one that Maggie endorsed — the one that went bankrupt before it was finished? Yes, it's Mirror Group Newspaper's new HQ, *Canary* Wharf. Geddit?

From hand to light relief

Television has been good to comics and related issues this month. First we had *The Bill*'s storyline (20.5.94) based on a comics shop owner ("livin' in fantasyland, aren't you? You read too many comics, you, Jason.") who allowed his shop to be used as a clearing house for stolen gear (watch out all you retailers out there, the long arm, etc. etc.). The boy didn't have a thing wrong with him apart from arrested development (ha, ha,) and smoking too much ganja.

Much more fun than that, however, was the appearance of snack manufacturer Philius Fogg's latest TV ad, which, following in a tradition established some months ago by **Comics International**, has a conversation between air-traffic controllers discussing a metabolically challenged flying culinary superhero thus: "Is it a bird; is it a plane?"

"No, it's a fat chef." Very like: "No, it's a flying turd in a cloak", I think.

This one could run and run. Other examples in the "Is it a bird, is it a plane..." competition to **Comics International**, please. The prize will be a trip to EuroDisney. Not.

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OPENS MIDDAY

RANSON NOTES

A monthly column in which leading comics artist Arthur Ranson examines the social impact, artistic content and foibles of contemporary comics and their creators.

THE POSH Sunday papers all do these diary things, so why not us? In addition, I have been asked more than once recently about the day to day life of a comic book artist, so this should interest at least two readers.

Monday Having put washing in the machine, start work at 9.00am inking a page of **Buttonman II**. The story has moved to Florida, so I'm learning to draw palm trees in the sun instead of conifers in the snow.

My daughter takes a letter for me to post to an A level student writing an essay arguing the claims of comic art based on his objection to the *High-art/Low-art* distinction. Answering his questionnaire I found I was happy to be doing low-art and I've told him the distinction is one of intention.

10.30: 'Phone Dez about a "can" that became a "can't" in my March piece for **Comics International** and thank him for passing on a letter resulting from it — three guys offering to join a posse.

I'm inking a Florida estate in swamplands to define its geography for future action. Enough detail to convince but not restrict me too much when I need to use the place for close-up background later. Surrounded by tourist guides for reference of Florida architecture and plant life. Read scripts of future episodes to ensure I draw nothing that will make plot impossible.

Take washing from machine at 10.45. Back to work till 12.30 when post delivers building society and insurance company invitations.

Lunch of tea and peanut butter on oat cake at desk. Fifteen minute break to shop for supper, and a half an hour at 3.30 for crossword and tea. Complete inking at 7.30.

Tuesday Post brings four '70s comics from my son. **Phantom Stranger** and **Bat Lash** carry no credits. **The Flash** and **Dr Strange** both drawn by Gil Kane. Some nice figure work in both, but **Dr Strange** gives him more scope for the dramatic. Finally start work at 10.00, pencilling onto tracing paper page 7 of part 13 of **Buttonman II**. Waste time planning route from New York to Florida hoping to find refs for all correct states.

The page layout is less formal. To indicate change of pace and to organise room for lots of speech.

2.30: learn Keith Watson has died. Hadn't seen him for years, learning he was ill, I became reluctant to call him. Now wish I had. Keith produced beautiful artwork, but starting at the top, **Dan Dare** for **Eagle** with Frank Hampson, became as much a drawback as an advantage.

Pencils complete by 4.30, break for tea and crossword. Back at 5.45, ink frame outlines onto board. I've changed the layout which meant more pencilling, to add small linking frame to improve continuity and composition. Finish at 7.00. Read and amend proof of interview for **Zarathustra**, the fanzine from Bill Storie.

Wednesday Post brings **2000AD**, **Comic World** and return of piece (too short) from **Comics International**. In **2000AD** I notice *Journal of Luke Kirby* and *Babe Race 2000*. Loved him, hated her.

Comic World has many interesting features but infuriating layout, full of (cont p.45)s.

10.30: start work. Trace down drawing, start to ink. At 12.00 I phone John Wagner. Should Harry Exon grow a beard as part of his disguise? We compromise on heavy stubble. We wonder when Kitchen Sink will send over half of advance. Have tea and cheese sandwich at desk at 1.30.

3.30: more tea. 5.00: ditto. Only one frame left to ink. At 5.15 a phone call from a distressed friend. Stop work to listen until 6.45. Go make tea. 7.00: 'phone call from distressed relative. Stop work to listen, call ends 8.50. Go make supper. Wonder, again, if I should get an answerphone.

Thursday Post brings Comic Creators Guild Newsletter. CCG seems to be at last gasp. Unable to find enough people to be on the committee. Bad news too that their **Comics Forum** magazine is to fold. Wonder if some publisher could pick it up. Somebody should. Editor Guy Lawley's aim to establish British critical tradition produced very intelligent and informed articles.

I tidy house before the cleaning lady gets here.

Start inking at 10.30, complete by 12.30. Tidy desk. Run putty rubber over artwork. Lay out Eco-line ink bottles and water, start colouring. 2.00: call from Jeremy who collects artwork. He promises to send details of up-coming auction of comics and related material by Christies. Low-Art Auctioneers? Ask him to get May **Judge Dredd Megazine** as I'm in it and done something different for me. It was drawn last November.

3.30: break for tea and cake. A little pleased at how it's going. Colour until 6.00. A visitor tonight will require that I wash and shave.

Friday Post brings DC Comics newsletter for freelancers, and a cheque from Conquistador for artwork sold. Sales slow. Recession? DC newsletter prompts me to post my pages from **Megazine** to an editor at DC I want to work for. He only knows my **Batman** stuff.

Start work 9.30. Colouring. Lots of water. Tea and peanut butter sandwich at desk. 2.10: won't stop to shop for decent food. 3.50: colouring complete. Good. I can go away this Bank Holiday weekend. Too late I wonder if I have drawn Florida in the right season of year. Go shop for supper.

4.50: start inking touch-ups with pen and use brush to ensure density of solid blacks. There are more solid black inks than Higgins Black Magic but they don't flow from the nib so well. Complete blacks at 6.45, break for tea and sandwich till 7.10. Use process white to clean up between frames. Find bits of colouring missed, put them in.

Put thin paper cover over each piece of artwork to prevent black transferring over time. Pencil title, episode and page number on each board and each cover. Write invoice. Parcel it all up for posting tomorrow. I used to return scripts, which I've pencilled to indicate amendments to captions and balloons where I have added extra frames. Now John Wagner has asked me to send directly to him. He finalises his words when he sees the finished artwork. We have agreed by 'phone that I add a sequence to a later episode which he will dialogue when he sees it. Artists: don't do this at home, not without a consenting author. I've finished work by 8.30. Iron and pack for weekend.

Saturday In Oxford I visit the one remaining comic shop. I want Frank Miller's **Daredevil** and a 1960s **Phantom Stranger**. No luck with either. Consider **Cerebus: The Complete Works** but have cash flow and shelf space problems. Buy **Previews**. Lots of pages for a pound. As I'm leaving I bump into Jenni Scott, Small-Press Coordinator for CCG. Nice surprise, Jenni is not a big person. I used to think she was the small Press Co-ordinator. I'm impressed that Jenni travels from Oxford to London for committee meetings. I rarely get to CCG things lately and I only live in the next borough. Jenni thinks CCG will survive but more work for existing committee members.

Jenni appears as background figure in an episode of **Buttonman II**. So does Dez. It amuses me to do this and I hope it boosts sales.

Sunday Look at pictures in **Previews**. Wonder if dentistry course is essential for the modern comic book artist. All the existing visuals make me feel insecure. What do I have to do to keep up?

Sit in the garden, read my notes and wonder how many hours I've worked, but can't bother to count. Aware of gratitude to Royal Mail.

Pretend to work on my **Comics International** piece. Perhaps I'll write it long hand tomorrow instead of waiting to get back home to the typewriter. They will hate that, but I can work and sun-bathe at the same time.

© Arthur Ranson, 1994

***Arthur Ranson** is one of the UK's top comics artists. In the 1970s, he started work at **Look-In** and for many years drew a wide range of TV and pop-related strips.*

*It is a mark of his versatility that, having won popular and critical acclaim for Danger Mouse, he went on to achieve the same with **2000AD**'s Anderson: Psi Division and his first US work, **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight - Tao**.*

*His **Buttonman** graphic novel published by Kitchen Sink is currently in comics shops.*

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ADVANCE LISTINGS

READERS: You can use this Advance Listings section as an order form with your direct sale retailer or mail order supplier. Simply mark the items you require, preferably in red or blue pen or with a highlight marker. Then detach this section of the magazine and return it to your supplier, together with a note of your name, address and phone number and guarantee not missing any of the new titles being published. Certain retailers may not accept standing orders, so check with them first. Using this system will also help your supplier when ordering titles, to know which are presold.

All prices of US titles listed are in dollars. Where dollar and sterling prices (ie $1.50/£1) is stated, UK price is not the air-freighted import price, but instead denotes that the title will be nationally distributed approximately ten weeks later at a lower-than-airfreight price. Import prices are usually converted at a rate of $1.00 = 80p.

Shipping dates given are usually one week before airfreight copies arrive with your retailer/mail order supplier. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers. Late shipping, cancellations and changes in content will be detailed in future issues of ***Comics International****.*

Key to abbreviations used:

1 & 2 + 3	=	*Writer & penciller + inker*
sqbd	=	*perfect bound; squared spine; without staples*
b&w	=	*black & white content*
pc	=	*part-colour content*
hbk	=	*hardback (book) edition*
tpbk	=	*trade paperback, squarebound, comic size*
Xpg	=	*number of interior pages*

V = violence; N = nudity; S = sex

All comics are 32 page colour titles unless stated otherwise

SHIPPING: JUNE-JULY '94

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

Cerebus 183 (Sim & Gerhard) *Mothers and Daughters Book Three — Reads, Part 9.* No information for the current storyline. $2.25

AC COMICS

Femforce 74 (Black & Heike) Five of Femforce's deadliest foes team up to form The Fear Force. $2.95

ANTARCTIC PRESS

Fantastic Panic 6 (Yamasaki) Mystery and intrigue in the Japanese underworld. b&w $2.75
Furrlough 18 (anthology) Anthropomorphic tales. b&w . $2.75
Gold Digger 12 (Perry) Gina and Cheetah travel to South America in search of clues. b&w $2.75
Golden Warrior Iczer One 3 (Hirano & Moriki) One of the seven Gods of War attacks the Karura Kingdom. Mature readers. b&w $2.95
Ninja High School 40 (Dunn) Quagmire High School is rebuilt as the characters from NHS return to their roots. b&w $2.75
NEW **Star Jacks 1** (Alston & Perry) Interstellar anthropomorphic action. b&w $2.75
Wild Life 7 (anthology) Another showcase of anthropomorphical tales. Bi-monthly. b&w $2.75

AXIS COMICS

NEW **Axis Source Book 1** (various) Axis heroes and villians. $2.50
B.E.A.S.T.I.E.S 3 (Saltares) The team confront their first real threat, a super-powered assassin, Shield. . . . $1.95
Dethgrip 2 (Smith & Callahan + Albrecht) Dethgrip has kidnapped a member of Tribe and is holding her hostage in a European castle. $1.95
Nightvenger 2 (DiGesu & Thomas) The fate of Nightvenger's friend Joseph is revealed. $1.95
NEW **Marcus Arena 1** (Hinson & Cullins + Detracca) Set in the 31st century, this series features the adventures of Earth's greatest zero gravity warrior. $1.95
NEW **Power Company 1** (Dinehart & Pensa + Krantz) Six teenagers discover they possess strange powers and band together to form a renegade super-team. $1.95
Quantum 5 #2 (Jolley & Phillips + Martin) The team are caught between the deadly Shard and the powerful government agency that has them under its control. $1.95
Shaman's Tears 3 (Grell) In his first Axis story, Joshus Brand comes face to face with the Bar Sinister. . $1.95
W 3 (McDonald & O'Connell) The W squad take a trip to Japan which proves to be anything but pleasurable. $1.95

BONGO COMICS

Itchy & Scratchy 3 (Vance & Morrison) Scratchy decides it's time to leave showbiz and find a less damaging line of work. $2.25
Radioactive Man 412 (#4) (Groening + Vance & Morrison) The death of Radioactive Man from 1982 and the tragic consequences of Dark Radioactive Man's story. $2.25

CALIBER PRESS

Deadworld 11 (Thayer & Torres) The zombies versus the leper colony, with both sides intent on eradicating the other. b&w $2.95
Baker Street Sketchbook (Davis) A 48-page special featuring the seminal work of the artist for DC's **Sandman Mystery Theatre**. b&w $3.50
Negative Burn 12 (various) Features *Mr Mamoulian* (Bolland); Alan Moore's *Songbook*; *Twilight People* (Ricketts); *Micra* (Waldron & Boonthanakit) Mature readers. b&w $2.95

CONTINUITY

Armor 12 (Stone & Velluto) Silver Streak and Scarlet Streak have been kidnapped and it's up to their brother, Armor, to save them. $2.50
Crazyman 2 (Stone & Barry) Giant Ragged Rabid Ratman returns and becomes a superhero. $2.50
Earth 4 #9 (Stone & Barry + Drake) The elemental force known as Fyre makes her move. $2.50
Knighthawk 3 (Stone & Adams + Infante) Introducing Knighthawk's deadly nemesis — Noman, the manufactured man. $2.50
Hybrids 5 (Stone & ?) The Hybrids are captured by Megalith and handed over to the government. . . . $2.50
Ms Mystic 9 (Stone & Barry + Drake) The scene-setter for Continuity's big summer crossover, as Ms Mystic becomes embroiled in the beginning of an Intergalactic War. $2.50
Samuree 9 (Damato & Benes) The introduction of a new character in Samuree's life. $2.50
Megalith 12 (Stone + Shooter & Velluto) Jim Shooter joins up for co-plotting as Megalith embarks on a search for Earth 4. . . . . $2.50
Transylvania 2 (Adams) Frankenstein's Monster, Vlad the Impaler and the Werewolf all battle each other in the Count's haunted castle. $2.50

DARK HORSE

SHIPPING JUNE 14TH

Aliens: Stronghold 2 (of 4; Arcudi & Mahnke) Biotechnologist Caspar Nordling has created a synthetic alien. His guests are a little concerned about Caspar's sanity.. . . . . $2.50
Atlas 3 (Zick) Continuing the epic adventure of Atlas, as he faces defeat for the first time. $2.50
NEW **Comics' Greatest World: Will To Power 1** (of 12; Prosser & Manley) *Arcadia.* Titan now works for the American government, and his first job is to clean up Arcadia and X. $1.00
Dark Horse Presents 86 (anthology) Featuring: *Star Riders* (Gagnon & Martin III); *The Eighth Wonder* (Janes & Plunkett); *A Breath of Fresh Air* (Watt-Evans & Robinson) Mature readers. b&w $2.50
NEW **Indiana Jones and the Golden Fleece 1** (Rawson + McGreal & Hooper + Woch) Two-parter with Indy in Turkey in search of the fabled Golden Fleece. . . . $2.50
John Byrne's Next Men: Power 4 (Byrne) The final fates of Sandy Tolliver and her dream-created comic book heroes and villains. Mature readers. $2.50
Madman Comics 2 (Allred) Madman discovers the secrets behind Mott the Alien and the beatniks. $2.95
Out of the Vortex 9 (Barrett & McDonnell & Magyar) The Vortex brings Motorhead under his scrutiny as the action moves to Cinnabar Flats. $2.00
NEW **The Shadow Movie Adaptation 1** (Kaluta) Adaptation of the forthcoming movie tells of Shadow's first meeting with his arch-rival, Shiwan Khan. . . . $2.50

SHIPPING JUNE 21ST

Barb Wire 3 (Arcudi & Lawlis + Akin) Chaos rules on the streets of Steel Harbour and only Barb can stop the destruction. $2.00
Grendel Tales: Devil in our Midst 2 (of 5; Seagle & Mireault + Grist + Delaney) The new Grendel is offered sanctuary at a deserted ice station with the inhabitants threatening mutiny. Mature readers. $2.95
Hellboy: Seed of Destruction 4 (Mignola w/Byrne) Hellboy, World's Greatest Paranormal Investigator and his band of "odd" associates in the climax of the Cavendish mansion story. Also chapter four of *Monkeyman & O'Brien*, by Art Adams. $2.50
Star Wars: Droids 3 (of 6; Thorsland & Gibson) C-3P0 and R2D2 become involved in an illegal operation on the Hosk moon. $2.50
Comics' Greatest World: Will To Power 2 (Prosser & Manley) *Arcadia.* Titan continues cleaning up the city as X confronts the Scream. . . $1.00
Caravan Kidd Pt 3 #2 (Manabe) Continuing the tales of Mian Toris and her companions. b&w $2.50
Enemy 2 (Grant & Schenck) Resolicited from Nov 1993. . . $2.50
Martha Washington Goes to War 2 (of 5; Miller & Gibbons) Martha Washington has seen the future, and although it looks great, it isn't. Mature readers. $2.95

SHIPPING JUNE 28TH

Catalyst Agents of Change 5 (Campbell + Battle & Glines) The scene-setter for the *Will to Power* summer crossover as Grace recovers from her battle with Titan. . . . $2.00
NEW **Classic Star Wars: A New Hope 1** (Thomas & Chaykin + Leialoha) Reprinted from the original Marvel **Star Wars** series. Cover: Arthur Adams. 64pg . . $3.95
Dark Horse Comics 22 (anthology) *Aliens; Mondo Pest* (Gilroy & Carmen); *Mecha* (Campbell & Perrin). $2.50
Hellhounds: Panzer Cops 5 (Oshii & Fujiwara) The National Police Agency prepares the Hellhounds' end and their replacement with a harder-edged fighting team. $2.95
Jonny Demon 2 (Busiek & Vokes + Patterson) Jonny's trapped in the subway under Boston with a bunch of demons on a suicide mission. $2.50
White Like She 2 (Fingerman) Luther, the janitor, discovers the joys of womanhood, while his/her creator gets his hands wet with some new friends. $2.95

SHIPPING JULY 5TH

Aliens: Colonial Marines 10 (of 10; Jolley & Nadeau + Ensign) The concluding part of the army versus aliens storyline. $2.50
Bubblegum Crisis: Grand Mal 4 (of 4; Warren) The enigmatic Knight Sabers returns and causes a crisis among the team in this concluding episode.. . . . . $2.50
Hammer of God 2 (of 3; Baron & Pensa) Judah is in big trouble after destroying the headquarters of the Gang Ga-Ga. $2.50
James Bond 007: Shattered Helix 2 (of 2; Howett & Jackson + Lloyd) Concluding part finds James in battle with Cerberus. $2.50
Time Cop Movie Adaptation 1 (of 2; Verheiden & Randall) Adapting the film produced by Dark Horse Comics (due for a summer release). . $2.50

DC COMICS

SHIPPING JUNE 14TH

NEW **Batman/Punisher: Lake of Fire** (O'Neil & Kitson + Pascoe) The Azrael Batman and Marvel's toughest vigilante team up to battle Jigsaw in the streets of Gotham City. $4.95
Adventures of Superman Annual 6 (Kesel & Hor + Schoultz) *An Elseworlds Annual.* A rag-tag band of superheroes band together to stop an alien invasion. Continues in **Superboy Annual 1**. $2.95
Batman 510 (Moench & Manley) *Knightsend, Part 7* (of 10). Batman versus Batman as Valley refuses to give up the Dark Knight mantle $1.50
Black Orchid 12 (Vertigo; Foreman & Guay + Woch) Black Orchid decides to kill Elliot Weems but discovers that he holds the key to the survival of her race. Mature readers. $1.95
Deathstroke, the Terminator 39

(Wolfman & Hannigan) Deathstroke, Vigilante and Green Arrow are all on the trail of Dr.Death. $1.75
Flash 93 (Waid & Pacheco + Marzan Jr) Flash has to chase Impulse all over the world in a *Zero Hour* crossover. Kobra journeys to Keystone City to kill Linda Park$1.50
Hardware 18 (Milestone; McDuffie & Cowan + Rollins) *Worlds Collide, Part 9* (of 14). Hardware gets involved in the crossover as he discovers Fred Bentson's unique power. Features a guest appearance by Steel. . $1.50
NEW **Judge Dredd 1** (Helfer & Oeming) First of an ongoing series featuring DC's Americanised version of a distinctly British character. $1.95
Legionnaires 17 (Waid & Gardner + Cramer) *End of an Era, Part 1* (of 6). Reality is falling apart and even with the help of the foulest villains, the 30th century is looking insubstantial. Continued in **Valor** 22. . . . . $1.50
Sandman Mystery Theatre 17 (Vertigo; M Wagner + Seagle & Davis) *The Scorpion, Part 1* (of 4). The Golden Age Sandman has to battle a villain with a poison-tipped whip. Mature readers. $1.95
Shade, the Changing Man 50 (Vertigo; Milligan & Bachalo + Buckingham + Bryant) The current storyline culminates as Lenny, Kathy and Shade face a friend of the Devil. Mature readers. $1.95
The Spectre 21 (Ostrander & Mandrake) Professor Hazzard gains control of the Spear of Destiny as Superman is recruited by the government to lend a hand. . . $1.75
Star Trek 62 (Ryan & Whigham + Starr) This episode takes place at the very end of the Enterprise's first five year mission to boldly go where no comic has gone before. $1.75
Superboy 7 (Kesel & Grummett + Hazlewood) *Worlds Collide, Part 8* (of 14). Metropolis and Dakota have merged, resulting in the creation of Rift. $1.50
Superman: The Man of Steel 36 (L Simonson & Bogdanove + Janke) *Worlds Collide, Part 10* (of 14). Superman and Icon find themsleves doing battle with Rift. $1.50
Valor 22 (Busiek & Doran) *End of an Era, Part 2* (of 6). Valor rejoins the Legionnaires — but it may be too late to stop the end of time. $1.50
Wonder Woman 89 (Priest & Ross) Wonder Woman enters into an unholy alliance with Circe. $1.50

SHIPPING JUNE 21ST

Batman: Shadow of the Bat 30 (Grant & Blevins) *Knightsend, Part 8* (of 10). Batman versus Batman while hanging from a helicopter over Gotham harbour. $2.95
The Demon 50 (Ennis & McCrea) An untold tale of the Demon set aboard a 16th-century pirate ship. $1.95
Green Lantern 54 (Marz & Carr + Tanghal) Tragedy abounds as the new Lantern's girlfriend is brutally murdered by one of his foes — and his ring stops working. $1.50
Hawkman 12 (Messner-Loebs & Lieber + Minor) Continuing the countdown to *Zero Hour*, as Hawk God's origins are revealed. . . $1.75
Hellblazer 80 (Vertigo; Ennis & Dillon) *Rake at the Gates of Hell, Part 3* (of 6). As another of his friends dies, John struggles to stop all hell from breaking loose in London. Mature readers. $1.95
Icon 16 (Milestone; Bright + Gustovich) *Worlds Collide, Part 11* (of 14) Superman and Icon stop battling the villain to battle each other for a while. $1.75
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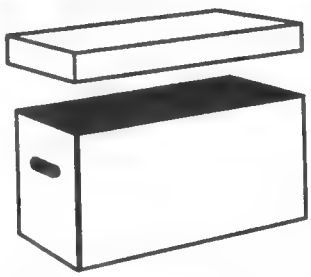

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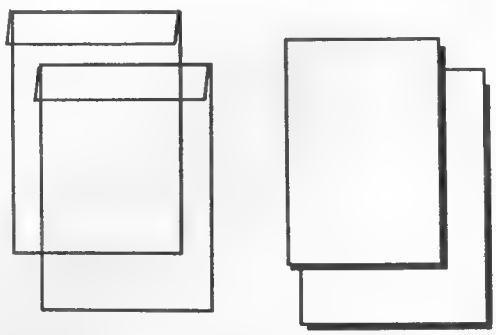

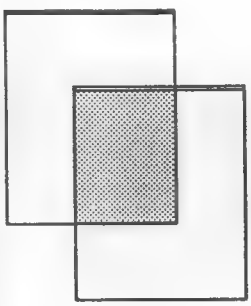

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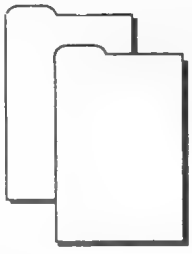

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Campos + Branch) *Aftershocks, Part 1* (of 3). A funeral for a Justice League member and the return of an Amazing old friend. $1.50
Kid Eternity 16 (Vertigo; Nocenti & Phillips) *A Date in Hell, Part 3* (of 4). The Kid visits his mentor, Ricketts, who offers some advice on his quest. Mature readers. $1.95
The Legion of Super-Heroes 60 (McCraw & Immonen + Boyd) *End of an Era, Part 3* (of 6). An ages old secret is revealed as the house clearing continues in the 30th century. $1.95
Lobo: In the Chair (one-shot; Grant & Emond) Lobo goes to the barbers and has a bad hair day. $1.95
The New Titans 113 (Wolfman & Jaaska) Nightwing learns the full extent of Starfire's changes, thus leading to a reassessment of their relationship. $1.95
Robin Annual 3 (Dixon & Nino) *An Elseworlds Annual.* Robin as a C19th Japanese assassin. $2.95
Superman 92 (Jurgens & Rubinstein) After all the chaos in Metropolis, Massacre comes to town and in his battle with Superman, most of the rest of the city is levelled. $1.50
Xombi 3 (Rozum & Birch) The not-dead but not-quite-alive Milestone hero battles the Four Stable Boys of the Apocalypse. $1.75
NEW **Vamps 1** (of 6; Vertigo; Lee & Simpson) Dracula meets Thelma and Louise. A team of female vampires on motorbikes cut a bloody swathe across the USA. Mature readers. $1.95

SHIPPING JUNE 28TH

Adventures of Superman 515 (K Kesel & Kitson & McCarthy) Superman battles Massacre in the rubble of Metropolis. $1.50
Animal Man 74 (Vertigo; Delano & Braun + Fama) The Life-Power Church of Maxine continues to grow and her personal crusade begins. Mature readers. $1.95
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 63 (O'Neil & Kitson + Hanna) *Knightsend, Part 10* (of 10). Bruce Wayne comes out on top as the year long story concludes. $1.75
Blood Syndicate 17 (Milestone; Velez Jr & Chriscross & Hendrix) *Worlds Collide, Part 13* (of 14). The Blood Syndicate becomes involved in cross-dimensional events. . . . $1.50
Detective Comics 677 (Dixon & Nolan + Hanna) *Knightsend, Part 9* (of 10). Batman sees the destruction of his beloved Batmobile and Robin stands around feeling helpless.$2.50
Gunfire 4 (Wein & Erwin + Garvey) Gunfire confronts Maraud3, a new type of vigilante. $1.75
Justice League Task Force 15 (Waid & Velluto + Albrecht) *Aftershocks, Part 2* (of 3). The League is disbanded. Jonn J'Onzz and Gypsy discover that their relationship is changing. . . . $1.50
L.E.G.I.O.N '94 #69 (Peyer & Jorgenson + Pascoe) Dox 's control is slipping away, as is reality when Zero Hour starts to take hold. . . . $1.75
Outsiders 10 (Barr & Pelletier + Campanella) The Outsiders discover the truth behind Roderick the vampire. $1.95
The Ray 4 (Priest & Porter + Jones) The Ray's worst enemy may be his only salvation, but Doctor Polaris wants to kill him. $1.95
Sandman 63 (Vertigo; Gaiman & Hempel) *The Kindly Ones* continues. The might of the Furies is unleashed and Rose Walker re-enters Morpheus' life. Mature readers. $1.75
Shadow Cabinet 3 (Milestone; Washington III & Leon + Martinbrough) The superhero team must battle the eco-terrorists known as the Arcadian League. . . . $1.75
Star Trek Next Generation 62 (Friedman & Marcos) Troi is stalked by a killer who has apparently finished off Riker and Worf. $1.75
Star Trek: The Next Generation — The Series Finale (Friedman & Pike + Marzan Jr.) Adaptation of the final episode of the television series.$3.95
Steel 7 (L Simonson + Bogdanove & Batista + Faber) *Worlds Collide, Part 12* (of 14). John Henry Irons has to persuade the others that the battle against Rift is worth fighting. . $1.50
Swamp Thing 145 (Vertigo; Millar & Hester + DeMulder) Swamp Thing travels to Amsterdam to find Linda Holland. Mature readers. . . . $1.95
Team Titans 23 (Jensen + Jimenez & Dodson + Blyberg) Donna Troy returns as a Darkstar as **Zero Hour** begins to seriously affect the team. (Penultimate issue.) $1.95
Witchcraft 3 (Vertigo; Robinson & Kristianson + Yeowell) The Witches' search for vengeance on the streets of contemporary London. Mature readers. $2.95

SHIPPING JULY 5TH

Action Comics 702 (Michelinie & Guice + Rodier) Bloodsport returns to help clean up the city. $1.50
Anima 6 (Witcover + Hand & Crespo + Ivy) Anima begins her quest through Arkana, the home of the Animus. $1.75
NEW **Aquaman 1** (David & Egeland + Vancata) Ongoing series continuing from the **Time and Tide** mini-series. . . $1.50
The Batman Adventures 23 (Puckett & Parobeck + Burchett) Poison Ivy is the only hope of salvation for a dying diplomat. $1.50
Books of Magic 4 (Rieber & Amaro + Gross) Death guest stars as a friend of Tim's dies and the reality of what has happened to the Faerie realm becomes clear. Mature readers. $1.95
Catwoman 13 (Dixon & Balent) Catwoman hunts Selkirk, a vicious arms dealer with a stolen medical device. $1.50
The Darkstars 22 (Friedman & Collins + Branch) Donna Troy becomes Earth's new Darkstar and John Stewart learns that being a Darkstar is not at all like being a Green Lantern. $1.95
Damage 5 (Joyner & Marimon + Hillsman) Damage is arrested by the New Titans for the *damage* caused in his battle with Troll. $1.75
Doom Patrol 81 (Vertigo; Pollack & McKeever) Dorothy finds she is once again losing control of her powers. Mature readers. $1.95
Green Arrow 89 (Dooley & Aparo + Fernandez) Green Arrow runs into Anarky in Gotham. $1.95
Guy Gardner: Warrior 23 (Smith & Byrd + Davis) Guy Gardner is so desperate for new super powers that he will do pretty well anything to acquire them. $1.50
The Huntress 3 (Dixon & Netzer) The Huntress's real identity is discovered by a cop — but will he use the knowledge against her? $1.50
Justice League International 67 (Jones & Williams + Dvorak) *Aftershocks, Part 3* (of 3) Just before the teams disband, Wonder Woman calls the remaining members together for a final mission. $1.50

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Showcase '94 #9 (anthology) *Batman's Villains* (Grant & Kristiansan); *Zero Hour Prelude* (Jurgens & Massengill). 48pg . $1.95
Kobalt 3 (Milestone; Rozum & Jones) Slick, Volt and Red Light are villains with designs on Kobalt. $1.75
Superboy Annual 1 (Kesel & Luzniak + Wiacek) Concluding the adventure started in *Adventures of Superman Annual 6*. 48pg $2.95
Static 14 (Milestone; Washington III & Leon + various) *Worlds Collide, Part 14* (of 14). The conclusion of the cross-dimensional crossover and the ultimate fate of Rift. $2.50

DEFIANT

Charlemagne 4 (Chichester & Pollina) Charlemagne battles ERJ and War Dancer. $3.25
Dark Dominion 9 (Wein & ?) Glimmer fights The Puritan as Schism draws closer. $2.50
Dogs of War 3 (Holcomb & Grey) Two of the Warriors of Plasm team leave to become mercenaries. $2.50
Good Guys 8 (? & Boone) The kids get a spectacular beach-front headquarters. $2.50
Prudence & Caution 2 (Claremont & Fern) A young girl with the power to conquer worlds and her friend with an android arm which has a mind of its own. 48pg $2.50
War Dancer 5 (Weiss) Billy Ballistic appears for the first time in full superhero gear. $3.25
Warriors of Plasm 11 (Lapham) Enter the Dark Lords of Quantum Earth and the first appearance of Gossamer, Lorca's new lover. $2.50

DRAWN & QUARTERLY

No product shipping from the publisher this month.

EC COMICS

Crime Suspenstories 8 Featuring stories by Davis, Wood, Kurtzman & Evans. $2.00
Haunt of Fear 8 (anthology) Featuring stories by Kamen, Ingels, Davis and Craig. $2.00
Incredible Science Fiction 8 (anthology) Featuring stories by Feldstein, Kamen, Roussos and Wood. $2.00

ECLIPSE COMICS

Eclipse is believed to have ceased publishing, although the Claypool line is intended to continue as an independent imprint.

FANTAGRAPHICS

Alex 3 (Kalesniko) Alex gets a visit from an old friend who thinks he has built the ultimate chicken. Mature readers. b&w $2.95
Are We Having Fun Yet? (Griffith) A celebration of **Zippy**. $12.95
The Cereal Killings 6 (Sturm) The story of the Kelcog Cereal Company. Mature readers. b&w $2.50
Jim Vol 2 #3 (Woodring) Jim pays the price of having fun. b&w . $2.50
NEW **Omaha the Cat Dancer Volume 2 #1** (Waller & Worley) Omaha travels back to Mipple City and dyes her hair back to its natural colour — auburn. Mature readers. b&w $2.50
Palestine Book One: A Nation Occupied (Sacco) The history of the Palestine people, as told by Sacco. Mature readers. b&w 128pg . $12.95
Pressed Tongue 2 (Cooper) A story of skin disease, babies with tentacles and perversion. Mature readers. b&w $2.95
Real Girl 7 (various) Contemporary pornography from Sunah Cherwin, and what women talk about when men aren't there. 40pg b&w . . $3.50
Zoot 6 (Langridge & Langridge) Continues with four new stories. Mature readers. b&w $2.50

IMAGE COMICS

Bloodstrike 11 (Extreme Studios) A special appearance by Savage Dragon as the heroes battle Cyberface and Overlord. $1.95
Brigade 10 (Extreme Studios) Brigade return to their Malibu HQ and find it occupied by a stranger. $1.95
Brigade 26 (Extreme Studios) *Images of Tomorrow*. The battle with Youngblood leaves the team in tatters. $1.95
Codename: Stryke Force 5 (Silvestri & Peterson) A member of Stryke Force is accused of being a double agent for Stormwatch. $1.95
Cyberforce 6 (Silvestri & Silvestri + Williams) Ballistic discovers a hatful of secrets about Cyberforce, Cyberdata and S.H.O.C.s, super-powered drug dealers. $1.95
Deathblow 6 (Lee + Choi & Sale) Introducing Sister Mary, the toughest nun in New York. $1.95
Freak Force 7 (Larsen + Giffen & Bridges) Kill Cat, a man from Dart's past, is hot on her tail. $1.95
Gen 13 #5 (Lee + Choi & Campbell + Garner) An extension to the series as the final episode stretches into two issues. $1.95
Kindred 4 (Lee & Booth + Ruffner) Backlash and Lynch face each other in a death duel to prove their innocence. $1.95
The Newmen 3 (Stephenson & Matsuda) After recent events the team decide to take a well-earned rest. $1.95
The Pact 3 (Valentino & McDaniel) The Pact members must resolve their differences or the team will be disbanded. $1.95
Pitt 5 (Hotton & Keown) Pitt stands vigil as Timmy lies, at death's door, in hospital. $1.95
Savage Dragon 11 (Larsen) The Fiend is back and gunning for the Chicago cop. $3.50
Stormwatch 10 (Marz & Turner) The team return from Japan to face Talos, the excaped Warguard member $1.95
Supreme 13 & 14 (Extreme Studios) Supreme, powerless after his lastest battle, enters an unholy alliance with Grizlock, his greatest foe. . . . $1.95
Team Youngblood 10 (Extreme Studios) Cybernet overrun the Team Youngblood headquarters — and most of the team members. . . $2.50
Violator 2 (Moore & Sears + Pennington + Capullo) The slapstick mini-series continues with the Violator in the depths of Hell. $1.95
Union 0 (Heisler & Benjamin) A look at the world of Aegena, the home planet of Union. $2.50

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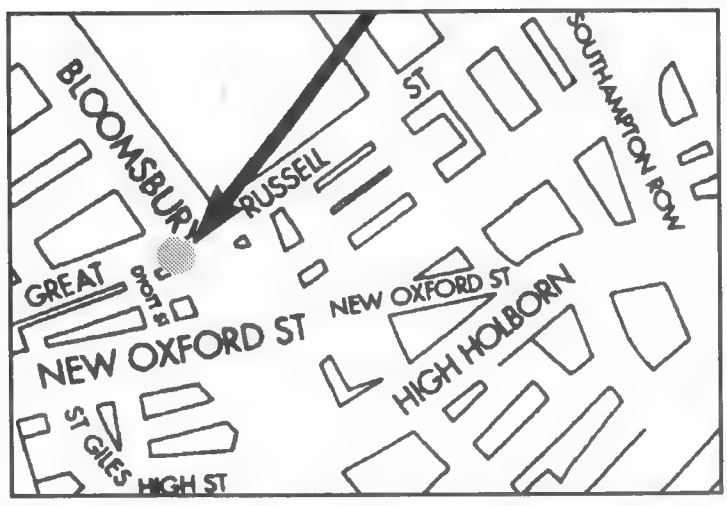

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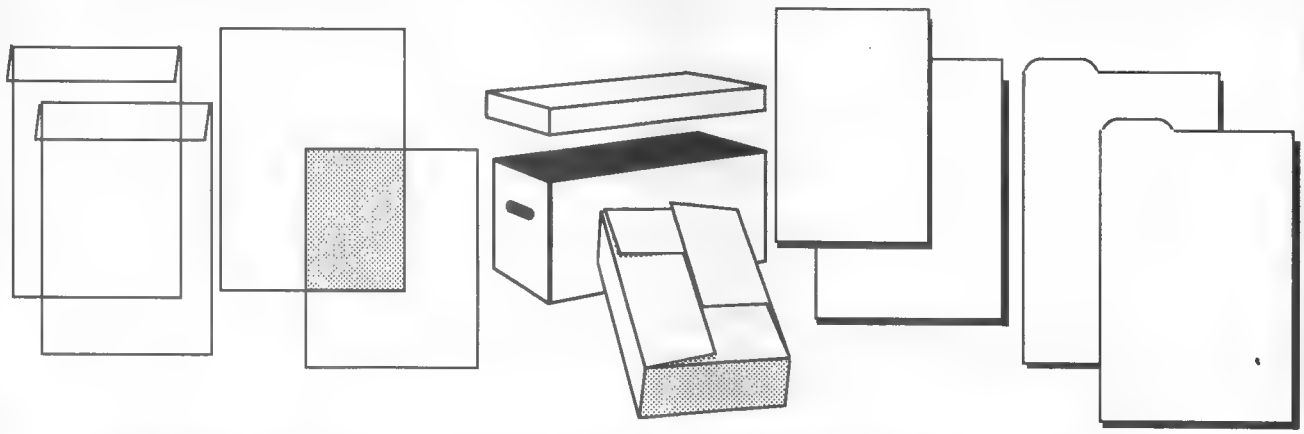

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Vanguard 8 (Carlson & Jarvinen + Sinclair) Vanguard versus Pitt. $1.95
Youngblood 6 (Liefeld + Miki + Taganashi) Reintroducing the team that started the Image Comics Bandwagon rolling. 48pg $3.50
Youngblood #1: The Silent Version (Liefeld + Miki) A new version of issue 1, re-inked and coloured, with no dialogue. $12.95

KITCHEN SINK

The Art of Jack Kirby (edited by Ray Wyman) An appreciation of the late King of Comics. 244pg $28.95
From Hell: Volume 5 (Moore & Campbell) The latest instalment of the Jack the Ripper story. 60pg .. $4.95
Omaha the Cat Dancer 20 (Waller & Worley) Resolicitation, from May 1993. ..... $2.95

LIGHTNING

Bloodfire 0 (Lawrence & Parr + Weed) Bloodfire's origin. $3.50
Judgment Day 10 (Chow & Weed + Zyskowski) Justicar becomes the new leader of Judgment Day. $2.95
Perg 9 (Abrams + Mowry & Weed + Zyskowski) Caimen uses his powers to discover more about Perg. . $2.95

MALIBU

'Breed 6 (of 6; Bravura; Starlin) Raymond and Rachel battle hordes of demons in this final episode of the series. $2.50
Firearm 10 (Ultraverse; Robinson & Erskine) Swan returns a favour to his old employers when returning to England for a break. $1.95
Hardcase 13 (Ultraverse; Hudnall & Benefiel) A turning point in the life of Hardcase as more secrets about Choice are revealed. $1.95
Mantra 12 (Ultraverse; Barr & Dodson + Pepoy) Mantra teams up with The Strangers to defeat Boneyard. $1.95
The Night Man 9 (Ultraverse; Englehart & Hotz) Night Man must face a Werewolf who is also one of the richest and most powerful men in the city. $1.95
Prime 13 (Ultraverse; Jones + Strazewski & Breyfogle) Prime takes on the team of Kutt and Planet Class, both capable of doing serious damage to the Ultra. 48pg $2.95
Prototype 11 (Mason + Strazewski & Robinson + Whiting) Glare is back from the dead and Aladdin has him in his clutches. $1.95
Rune 6 (Windsor-Smith + Ulm + Floyd) The final fate of Noel Robinson and Erik Johnson is revealed as Rune is hailed as a new messiah. . . $1.95
Sludge 9 (Gerber & Lopresti + Martin) Origin issue as Sludge discovers just how he became a walking, talking pile of... er, sewer waste. $1.95
Solitaire 7 (Jones & Jones + Johnson + Kaalberg) Introducing Double-Edge. Is he a new hero or are his plans more sinister? $1.95
The Solution 10 (Ultraverse; Hudnall & Statema) Shadowmage is kidnapped by Vyr. $1.95
Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Hearts and Minds 1 (Altman & Davis + Pallot) Four issue mini-series based on the popular TV series. ... $2.50
Starslammers 2 (Bravura; Simonson) Rojas is loose on board a space ship, and that's bad news for the inhabitants. $2.50
The Strangers 13/Ultraverse Premiere 4 (Ultraverse; Englehart & Gustovich) The battle with Boneyard continues, with Mantra's honour at stake. $1.95
Warstrike 2 (Danko & Nguyen) Warstrike trails kidnappers in the South American rain forest. . . $1.95
Wrath 6 (Barr & Ammerman) Wrath confronts Colonel Carpenter about his rather dubious practices. ... $1.95

MARVEL COMICS

SHIPPING JUNE 7TH

Adventures of Cyclops & Phoenix 4 (Lobdell & Ha + Vey) Jean and Scott find clues about the Legacy Virus while battling Apocalypse. ... $2.95
NEW **Alice Cooper: Last Temptation of Alice 1** (of 3; Gaiman & Zulli) Alice Cooper's early life as told by Mssrs Gaiman and Zulli. $4.95
Cable 14 (Herdling & Skroce + Sellers) Cable and Lee Forrestor finally defeat D'Spayre in the everglades. $2.00
Captain America 430 (Gruenwald & Hoover + Bulanadi) Diamondback learns the truth about Snapdragon's fate as Cap deteriorates. $1.50
Conan Saga 89 (Thomas & J Buscema + Chan) Sword and swordplay. b&w $2.25
Daredevil 331 (Chichester & McDaniel + Collazo) *Tree of Knowledge, Part 6* (of 6). Daredevil, Captain America and Namor are helpless as Strucker takes over the Information Highway. $1.50
Darkhawk 42 (Fingeroth & Smith + Akin) Darkhawk reveals his identity to his parents. $1.50
Groo the Wanderer 115 (Marvel /Epic; Aragones + Evanier) Groo is bemused to discover that his best plans have failed. $2.25
Namor 53 (Herdling & Isherwood) Llyra gives birth to Namor's son and then generates her growth technology to mature him to adulthood — all in one issue! $1.50
Incredible Hulk Annual 20 (David & Immonen + Larroca + Vancata) The history of the Hulk through the eyes of the Abomination. Plus back-up strips featuring The Pantheon. $2.95
Ren & Stimpy 22 (Slott & Kazaleh) Derived from Nickelodeon's animated TV series. $1.95
Spider-Man 2099 22 (David & Leonardi + Williamson) Introducing Ventura. But is this new villain is strangely familiar? $1.50
Spider-Man Classics 17 (Lee & Ditko) Reprint of **Amazing Spider-Man 16**. $1.25
Spider-Man 49 (Mackie & Lyle) Introducing the shadowy figure who will have far-reaching repercussions on the life of the Spider-Man. . $1.95
Spider-Man Unlimited 6 (DeFalco & Lim + Sanders III) Spider-Man teams up with Thunderstrike; plus more on the mystery man. $3.95
Uncanny X-Men 315 (Lobdell & Madureira) Colossus is having second thoughts about joining the Acolytes, but how can he escape? $1.50
Web of Spider-Man 115 (Kavanagh & Saviuk + Baskerville) Peter confronts the mysterious figure that has been checking on Aunt May for the last five years of her life. . $1.50
Punisher Meets Archie: When Worlds Collide (Lash & Buscema + Goldberg) The Punisher has to prevent the mob from getting to a states prosecution witness, non other than Archie Andrews. $3.95
Punisher: A Man Called Frank (Dixon & Buscema) A tale set in the Old West, in which a rancher's family is killed by varmints. $6.95

SHIPPING JUNE 14TH

NEW **Annex 1** (of 4; Harris & McDaniel) A mechanism created to help disabled people is

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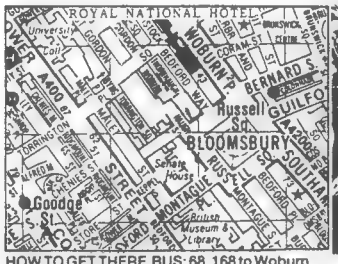

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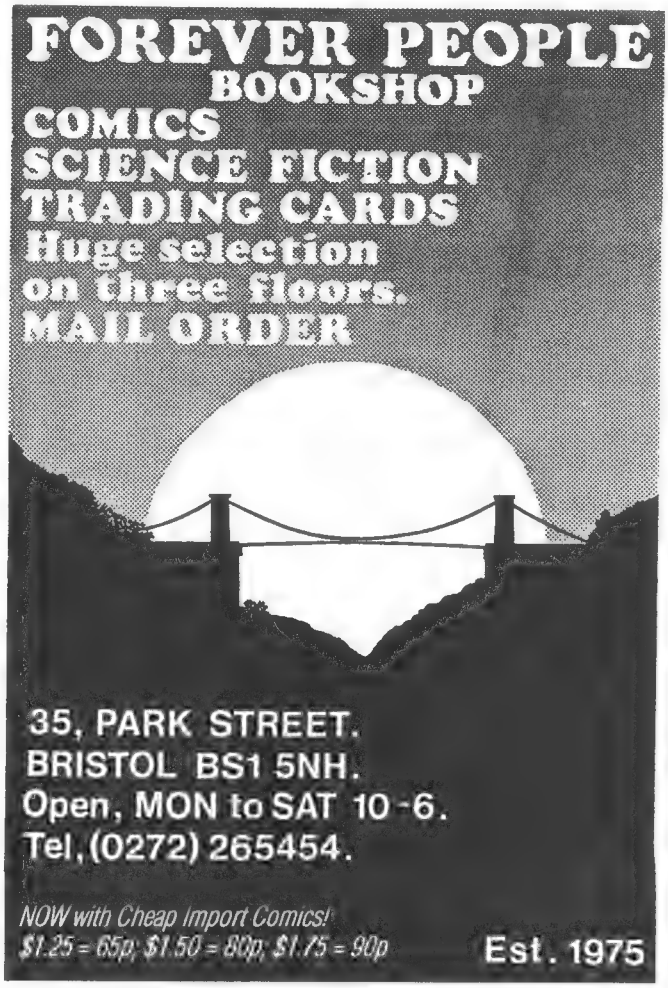

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used as a super-powered exo-skeleton. $1.75

Amazing Spider-Man 392 (DeMatteis & Bagley + Emberlin) Spider-Man is changing less into his Peter Parker threads, and decides to "kill off" Parker once and for all. $1.50

Blackwulf 2 (Herdling & Medina + Anderson) More from the unknown race of Earth dwellers. $1.50

Barbie 44 (Trusiani & DeCesare) Skipper and Barbie go to Africa for their vacation. $1.50

Conan Classics 3 Reprinting **Conan the Barbarian 3** $1.50

NEW **Deadpool II #1** (Waid & Churchill) 4-issue mini starring the mercenary with his side-kicks Copy Cat and Weapon X.$2.50

Ghost Rider 52 (Mackie & Larroca) Ghost Rider races to rescue Vengeance from Anton Hellgate. Also a Shriker back-up strip. $1.95

Guardians of the Galaxy 51 (Gallagher & West + Montano) Yondu rejoins the team as they try to unravel the mystery of Major Astro's new black costume. $2.95

Marvel Comics Presents 160 (anthology) *Vengeance* (Cooper & Jones); *Hawkeye* (Yomtov & DeCaire); *New Warriors* (Nicieza & Walker); *Mace* (Potts & Crain + Barta). $1.75

Marvel Swimsuit Special 1994 (various) Swimsuits on the moon as the superheroes take a holiday with the Inhumans. $4.50

Night Thrasher 13 (Slott & Boller) Beginning a new direction for the leader of the New Warriors. . . $1.95

Nova 8 (Marrinan & Marrinan + Stegbauer) Nova and friends run into Shatterforce and a bunch of unfriendly extraterrestrials. $1.95

Prison Colony 3 (Salick & Harris) Based on the forthcoming film. $1.50

Punisher War Zone 30 (Dixon & J Buscema) The Punisher redefines street justice. $1.95

Ravage 2099 #21 (Mills + Skinner & Miehm + Adams) Will Ravage destroy his own company — and worse, his family, to save his life? $1.50

Secret Defenders 18 (Brevoort + Kanterovich & Grindberg + Hudson) Doctor Druid calls Archangel, Iceman and Ant Man together against the all-new Swarm. $1.95

Silver Sable 27 (Wright & Purcell) Sable and Sandman have to stop the half-beast, Man-Eater, before he eats New York. $1.50

War Machine 5 (Kaminski + Benson & Gecko + Eklund) War Machine faces another super assassin, Deathtoll, in the search for information. $1.50

Wolverine 84 (Hama & Kubert + Farmer) Alpha Flight are on hand to make the X-Man's last days peaceful as he comes to terms with the fact that he is dying. $1.95

X-Factor 105 (DeMatteis + DeZango & Duursema & Milgrom) The death of Malice at the hands of Mr Sinister as the relationship between them and X-Factor unfolds. $1.50

X-Men Adventures Season II #7 (Macchio & Heebink & Albrecht) Fox TV adaptation. Continuing the new season. $1.25

X-Men: The Early Years 4 (Lee & Kirby + Reinman) Reprinting **Uncanny X-Men 4**. $1.50

SHIPPING JUNE 21ST

Avengers 377 (Harras & Epting + Palmer) Hera vows vengeance on Hercules, and the Avengers are not around to help. $1.50

Blaze 1 (Edgington & Wheatley + Ivy) The Vampire Hunter in his own series after the death of his partners. $2.95

Beavis & Butt-Head 6 (Lackey & Parker) Series based on the MTV characters. $1.95

Brats Bizarre 4 (Mills + Skinner & Scott) Resolicited from October 1993. . . . . $2.50

NEW **Break the Chain 1** (KRS-One & Baker) Rapper KRS-One and his unique insight into living in the ghettos. Comes with a cassette of his music. $6.99

Conan the Adventurer 3 (Thomas & Kayanan) Conan faces the rampaging hordes of VaBrythunia. $2.50

Coneheads 3 (of 4; Collins & Richmond) Mini-series adapting the movie. $1.75

Cosmic Powers 6 (of 6; Marz & Lim & Almond) Thanos collects the Cosmic powers; Tyrant's relationship with Glactus is revealed. $2.50

Doom 2099 #20 (Moore & Broderick + Nyberg) Doom's quest for world domination leads him to the Savage Land 2099. . . . . $1.50

Excalibur 80 (Ashford + Lobdell & Lashley + Elliot) The truth behind the Legacy Virus is revealed and the consequences have differing effects on various mutants. $1.95

Galactic Guardians 2 (of 4; Gallagher & West + Montano) Mini-series spinning off from **Guardians of the Galaxy**. $1.50

Ghost Rider 2099 #4 (Kaminski & Gross + Buckingham) The introduction of Warewolf as D/Monix's final solution to the Ghost Rider scenario. $1.50

GI Joe 151 (Hama & Gosier + Wallace) Snake Eyes continues his one man war against Cobra. . $2.00

Incredible Hulk 420 (David & Frank + Smith) Has the Pantheon found a cure for AIDS? Bruce's former side-kick, Jim Wilson, is about to become a guinea-pig. $1.50

Iron Man 2020 (Simonson & Wiacek) A one-shot featuring Tony Styark's son, Arno. $5.95

Marvel Age 139 Featuring an advance preview of the **Punisher /Batman** crossover and **Fantastic Force** series. $1.25

Marvel Tales 288 (Defalco & Frenz + Breeding) Reprinting **Amazing Spider-Man** 280. . . . . $2.95

Morbius 24 (Skinner + Mills & Napalitano + Cabrera) Basilisk returns — and Morbius is not prepared to face him. $1.95

Punisher 93 (Dixon & Fox) Thugs take over a neighborhood and a young boy calls the Punisher in to help. $1.50

Punisher War Zone Annual 2 (Dixon + Macchio & Eaglesham + Ross + Williamson + Dzon) Salvatore Carbones did not die at the hands of the Punisher, and now he's back to make Frank suffer. $2.95

Rocko's Modern Life 3 (Lewandowski + Auck & Lazellari + Fields) Ongoing series from the TV animation. $1.95

Sabretooth Classics 4 (David & Buckler + McLeod) Reprinting **Spectacular Spider-Man** 116. Sabretooth gets his butt kicked by a hostile woman. $1.50

Savage Sword of Conan 233 (Thomas & Watkiss) Sword and sorcery from the Hyborean age$2.25

Thunderstrike 11 (DeFalco & Frenz + Milgrom) Eric faces the twin threat of Wildstreak and Sangre. . . . $1.50

Transformers: Generation 2 #10 (Furman & Galan + Yanigher) Megatron and Optimus Prime form an alliance against the Swarm. . . 1.75

Warlock and the Infinity Watch 31 (Starlin & Oliffe) Warlock discovers the origin of Count Abyss, a man who would sacrifice his own soul for ultimate power. $1.95

What If? 64 (Furman & Senior) What

if Iron Man sold out? $1.50
X-Men 35 (Nicieza & Andy Kubert + Ryan) Jean and Scott return from the future with hope in their hands and run straight into a bunch of dead Marauders. $1.50
X-Men 2099 #11 (Moore & Lim) The return of the Theatre of Pain. $1.50

SHIPPING JUNE 28TH

Barbie Fashion 44 (Slate & Cool) Barbie and Ken take Grandpa Sam to the ear clinic. $1.50
Black Cat 2 (of 4; Kavanagh & Wildman + Baskerville) The Cat finds herself up against Faze and his megabytes as her quest for Chimera continues. $1.50
NEW **Blaze 1** (Hama & Martinez + LaRosa) New series following on directly from the **Spirits of Vengeance** series. $2.95
Dr Strange 68 (Abnett & Rubi + Harper) The merging of Strange and Dr Stevens continues. $1.95
Blade: The Vampire Hunter 2 (Edginton & Wheatley Jr + Ivy) The vampire hunter and Dracula struggle on, and there are more revelations about Bible John. $2.95
Fantastic Four 391 (DeFalco & Ryan + Bulanadi) *Nobody Gets Out Alive, Part 4* (of 4) The ultimate destruction of the Fantastic Four as the Black Panther recruits a new team to avenge the original's defeat. . $1.50
Force Works 2 (Abnett + Lanning & Tenney + Garcia) resolicited from November 1993. . . . . $3.95
Hellstorm 17 (Ellis & Manco) The return of Satana; plus Daimon and Jaine Cutter's fight. $2.00
Guardians of the Galaxy Annual 4 (Gallagher + Hall & West + Montano) The return of Rancor and the kidnapping of Talos. 64pg . . . $2.95
Iron Man 307 (Kaminski & Morgan + Mitchell) Iron Man comes face to face with Vor/Tex an artificial intelligence with anthropomorphic abilities. $1.50
The Lion King 2 (Weiss & More) Adapting the Disney film. 48pg $2.50
Machine Man 2020 (DeFalco & Trimpe + Windsor-Smith) Reprinting the 1985 mini series. $2.95
Marvel Comics Presents 161 (anthology) *Vengeance* (Cooper & Jones); *Hawkeye* (Yomtov & DeCaire); *New Warriors* (Nicieza & Walker); *Mace* (Potts & Crain + Barta). $1.75
Marvel Masterpieces II #2 (of 3; various) Reprinting the trading card set in comic form. $2.95
Marvels 0 (Busiek & Ross) Reprinting the Human Torch origin story from **Marvel Age**; plus interviews, preview pencils and a new introduction by Kurt Busiek. $2.95
New Warriors 50 (Nicieza & Robertson + Mahlstedt) Double-sized anniversary issue featuring the conclusion of the time spanning adventure and the defeat of the Sphinxs. $2.95
Nightwatch 5 (Kavanagh & Butler + Milgrom) Doubts are cast as to whether Nightwatch has a future as a hero. $1.50
NEW **NFL Pro Action 1** (DeMatteis & Saviuk + McLeod) Magazine sized overview of the American Football season with strips featuring superheroes. . $1.75
Official Index to the X-Men 5 (Ward) Index: X-Men 235-287. . . . . $1.95
Punisher 2099 #19 (Mills + Skinner & Morgan + Palmiotti) Introducing a brand new Punisher 2099. . . . $1.50
Punisher War Journal 69 (Grant & Haynes) *Pariah, Part 4* (of 4). Punisher versus the Marvel superheroes — and the outcome is that the Punisher will never be the same again. $1.95
Silver Surfer 95 (Marz & Sears + Christopher) Silver Surfer and the Fantastic Four uncover a Skrull plot on Monster Island. $1.50
Spectacular Spider-Man 214 (DeFalco & S. Buscema) Spider-Man and a very irrational Scorpion battle over New York, and an innocent bystander is killed. $1.50
NEW **Spider-Man: The Arachnis Project 1** (Lackey & Wildman) Spider-Man gets involved in a centuries spanning conspiracy rooted in the Smithsonian Museum. $2.95
NEW **Spider-Man: Web of Doom 1** (Harris & Kolins + DeLaRosa) Three issue mini-series about Spider-Man's webbing turning tragically against him. $1.75
William Shatner's Tekworld 23 (Marvel/Epic; Skolnick & Sullivan) Jake is on holiday in Mexico, but as with all good heroes, has little chance to relax. $1.75
Thor 477 (Thomas & Wyman) Thor and Thunderstrike team up against the deadly Destroyer and learn his amazing secret. $1.50
Thor Annual 19 (Thomas & DeCaire) Ties-into this years Avengers Annual as Pluto and Loki concoct a plan to kill Thor and Hercules. $2.95
NEW **Venom: TNights of Vengeance 1** (of 4; Mackie & Lim) Venom and Vengeance are being stalked by blood-sucking aliens. $2.95
X-Force 37 (Nicieza & Daniel) The Nimrod story continues as Cable is targeted for termination and the rest of the team wrestle with moral dilemmas about the entire Nimrod project. $1.50
X-Men Classic 98 (Claremont & Romita Jr + Green) Reprint. Cover by Ryan. $1.25
Doctor Who: Classic Comics 22 (various) Classic reprints from the sixties and seventies. $4.95

MILLENNIUM

No new product shipping from the publisher this month.

MIRAGE STUDIOS

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Volume 2 #5 (Lawson & Talbot) Leo — badly injured — battles the fish creatures on his own, while the other turtles search for him. $2.75
Usagi Yojimbo Volume 2 #8 (Sakai) Usagi meets up once more with a gambler who once coerced him into a big fight. $2.75

NOW COMICS

Originally solicited titles may not appear as company is believed to have gone into liquidation and ceased trading.

TOPPS COMICS

NEW **Cadillacs & Dinosaurs: Man Eater 1** (Thomas & St. Aubin) Introducing a further mini-series featuring characters created by Mark Schultz. $2.50
NEW **Ray Bradbury's Martian Chronicles Special 1** (various) One-shot special showcasing the classic Bradbury SF story. $2.50
Hellspawn 2 (Benson & Cleary) Hellspawn is well at home in the demon filled Bar Sinister. $2.50
Mars Attacks 2 (Giffen & Adlard) Series based on the trading card set. Why did the Martians attack in the first place? $2.95
NEW **Victory 1** (Giffen + Busiek & Palmiotti) Based on the

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There will be more information with application details in the next issue of Comics International

This will be our tenth UKCAC! We're planning loads of things to make this a really special event, but if you have any suggestions please write to:

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Zorro 6 (McGregor & Russell + Gil) Zorro is in chains as Lady Rawhide returns to cast her spells around the Pacific coastline protected by the masked man. $2.50

TRIUMPHANT

Chromium Man 11/Prince Vandal 8 (Riley & Harris) Chromium and Prince Vandal search for the Prince's true heritage and immediately run into The Chosen. $2.50
Doctor Chaos 8 (Riley & Fox) Chaos awakens from his coma to find that the political balance in Pathos has dramatically changed. $2.50
NEW **Company X 1** (Riley & Knapp) Doctor Chaos, foreseeing terrible trouble in the future, gathers together a new band of heroes to combat it. $2.50
Riot Gear 10 (Riley & Williams) Riot Gear decide to stay together, but to travel as the team did, it must find a spaceship. $2.50
Scavengers 12 (Riley & Walters) The Journeyman is recruited to help evacuate a planet targeted for elimination. $2.50

VALIANT

Archer & Armstrong/Eternal Warrior 26 (Baron + Van Hook & Halsted + DeCarlo) *The Chaos Effect, Part 9* (of 18) Geoff teams up with A&A, and they discover the injured body of Timewalker. $2.50
Armorines 4 (Gonzalez & Calafiore + Ramos) The team relaxes after its first harrowing mission, but rest is short-lived. $2.25
Armorines 5 (Gonzalez & Calafiore + Ramos) *The Chaos Effect, Part 11* (of 18). The threat of the Spider Aliens is growing and the team is despatched to face them. $2.25
Bloodshot 20 (Van Hook & Vosburg + Dixon) *The Chaos Effect, Part 6* (of 18) Bloodshot witnesses the tragedy caused by the Chaos Effect. . $2.25
Harbinger 33 (Fontenot & Chen) Harbinger begins its trek from Missouri back to New York and a run in with Dr Eclipse. $2.50
Harbinger 34 (Fontenot & Chen) *The Chaos Effect, Part 10* (of 18) Harada takes decisive action against the Spider Aliens when he learns of their conquest plans. $2.50
H.A.R.D.Corps 23 (Fontenot & Gonzalez + Ensign + Dixon) *The Chaois Effect, Part 13* (of 18) The team is fortunate enough to be in space when the Chaos Effect hits Earth. $2.25
Magnus: Robot Fighter 41 (Bedard & Calafoire + Mayo) *The Chaos Effect, Part 17* (of 18). Solar the Destroyer reaches Ladakh, the last hope for present day Earth. . . $2.25
Ninjak 8 (Moretti) *The Chaos Effect, Part 8* (of 18). Ninjak is caught in the middle of a mission as the Chaos Effect hits. Will he be able to complete his task? $2.25
Rai & the Future Force 26 (Bedard & Ross) *The Chaos Effect, Part 16* (of 18). Rai teams up with the Starwatcher to prevent Solar from reaching Phil. $2.25
Second Life of Doctor Mirage 11 (Layton & Chang + Branch) *The Chaos Effect, Part 3* (of 18). Mirage's powers are amplified by the Chaos Effect, but this could spell the end for his "second life". $2.50
Secret Weapons 13 (Berdinka) *The Chaos Effect, Part 7* (of 18). The secret team join up with Bloodshot after the Chaos Effect begins to take hold. $2.25
Shadowman 29 (Hall w/Ryder) *The Chaos Effect, Part 2* (of 18). Shadowman takes on Master Darque, and both entities' powers are enhanced. $2.50
Solar, Man of the Atom 38 (Van Hook & Wendel + Bollinger) *The Chaos Effect, Part 14* (of 18). Solar is in danger of extinction, so he sends a plea for help through time. . . . $2.25
Starwatchers 3 (Bedard & Leeke + Giordano) *The Chaos Effect, Part 15* (of 18). The Starwatchers versus Solar the Destroyer, and both know the cost of failure. $3.50
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter 16 (Baron & Simpson + Boyette) *The Chaos Effect, Part 4* (of 18). Mon-Ark's dinosaurs are running riot — and with their enhanced brains they are formidable foes. $2.50
The Chaos Effect: Alpha (Layton & Chang + Ordway) The crossover storyline starts here, as Darque unleashes a powerful and terrifying entity on the world. . . . . $Free
The Chaos Effect: Omega (Layton & Chang + Ordway) *The Chaos Effect, Part 18* (of 18). Who will live and who die as the Valiant heroes battle their greatest battle? $2.25
X-O Manowar 33 (Gonzalez + Levins) *The Chaos Effect, Part 12* (of 18). X-O joins forces with the other armoured Valiant heroes in a fight against the Spider Aliens. . . . $2.25

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

Animerica Vol 2:6 (anthology magazine) Manga strips, interviews, news, reviews. 64pg. $4.95
Battle Angel Alita Part 3 #8 (of 13; Kishiro) Alita's first race in the Second League continues. $2.75
Bio-Booster Armor Guyver 9 (of 12; Takaya) Guyver III versus Reichmann Gyro: life will never be the same again. $2.75
Lycanthrope Leo 4 (of 7; Kaji & Okamura) A Japanese version of *Teen Wolf*. A 17-year-old boy suddenly discovers that he is a werewolf. b&w $2.95
Maison Ikkoku Part Two 6 (of 6; Takahashi) Concluding part of the second series: a proposal of marriage is made. 40pg b&w $2.95
Mermaid Scar 3 (of 4; Takahashi) Sequel to **Mermaid Forest**. . . $2.75
Mobile Suit Gundam 0083 #8 (of 13; Production cels) Albion test runs the new Gundam prototype. . . . $4.95
NEW **Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind, Part Four #1** (of 5; Miyazaki) The return of the popular eighties manga series with a new story of the Worm-Handlers. . $2.75
Ranma 1/2 Part 3 #7 (Takahashi) Ranma still can't change back to being a boy, and old lecher Cologne is making advances. $2.75
Street Fighter II 3 (of 8; Kanazaki) Based on the successful *manga* series. $2.75

WARP GRAPHICS

Elfquest: Blood of Ten Chiefs 7 (Mangels + Collins & S. Blevins) Oakroot, a disaffected young loner, yearns for a wolf-friend — until one day when his wish is suddenly granted. $2.25
Elfquest: Hidden Years 14 (Pini & McKinney) The Wolfriders are attacked by warlord Grohmul Djun's army. $2.25
Elfquest: New Blood 18 (Pini & Blair) Windkin is the only survivor of a shipwreck, and has to escape a band of human elf-hunters. $2.25
Elfquest: Wavedancers 4 (Ditrich & Love + Szerkeres) Sleia, after shaking off a near-fatal illness, awakens from her coma with amensia. . . . $2.25

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Q

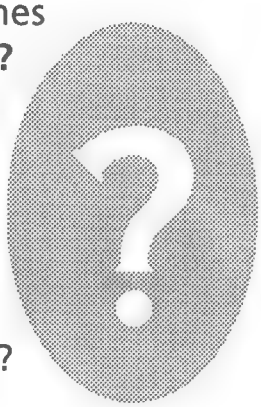
1 What are the real names of the original **X-Men?**

33 Who said **"Be pure. Be vigilant. Behave!"**

99 Which is the odd one out, and why?
Howard the Duck, Destroyer Duck, Fantastic Four, Challengers of the Unknown.

128 Name the members of the **Female Furies.**

135 What is the name of **Pitt's** friend?



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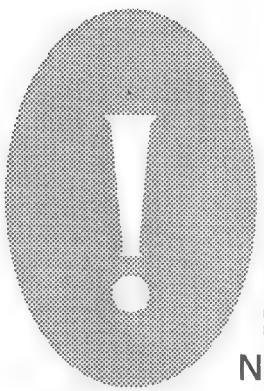
That's up to you.



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RETAIL index

Key to abbreviations used

imp	= air imported new issues
back	= back issues stocked
s-p	= small press & fanzines
merch	= comics-related trading cards, T-shirts, posters, models, etc
ind	= US independent comics (non-newsstand titles)
Brit	= British comics & albums
frgn	= foreign language comics
u/g	= underground comics
gn	= graphic novels & trade paperback editions
STO	= standing order service, new comics reserved
RPG	= role playing games

CENTRAL LONDON

■ **Acme Comic Shop**, 391 Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 8LQ (near Brixton tube) Mon-Thur 10-6; Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, wants lists welcomed) 071-274 6697

■ **Avalon Comics**, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11. Mon-Thur 10.00-5.45, Fri 10.00-6.30; Sat 9.30-6.00 (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 071-924 3609

■ **Comic Showcase**, 76 Neal St, London WC2. Mon - Wed 10-6; Thurs - Sat 10-7; Sun 12-5 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, cartoon books, original art) 071-240 3664

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 71 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1DG. Mon - Wed + Sat 10-6; Thurs + Fri 10-7 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, film & tv) *new no: 071 836 4179*

■ **Gosh!** 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1 (opposite British Museum) 10-6 7 days a week inc Bank Hols. Late Thur-Fri til 7 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, largest selection of newspaper strip compilations in UK) 071 636 1011

■ **Mega-City Comics**, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Sun 10-6; late Thurs + Fri to 7. (imp, back, merch, s-p, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film-tv fantasy, horror, body art, subculture, STO) 071 485 9320

■ **Platinum Age Comics/Bayswater Books**, 27 Craven Terrace, Lancaster Gate, London W2 3EL. Mon - Sat 11-7 (but sometimes till midnight!) (back, ind, u/g, general 2nd hand books, search service) 071 402 7398

■ **Stateside Comics PLC at Hamleys**, 4th Floor, 188/196 Regent Street, London W1 6BT. Mon-Wed 10-6.30; Thur 10-8; Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, ind, gn merch, Brit, STO) 071-287 3097

■ **Stateside Comics PLC at Virgin Megastore**, 14 Oxford Street, London W1N 9FL. Mon-Sat 9.30-8.00; Sun 12.00-7.00 (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, Brit, gn, STO) 071-637 4066 (fax 071 637 3966)

■ **Stateside Comics PLC at Virgin**, 1st Floor, Virgin Marble Arch, 527-531 Oxford St, London W1. Mon-Wed & Fri 9.30-7.30; Thurs 9.30-8; Sat 9-7.30; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, Brit, gn, STO) 071-499 8839

OUTER LONDON

■ **Altered Images**, 6 The Arcade, High St, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1ET. Mon-Wed & Fri 10-5.30; Thurs 10 - 6.30; Sat 9 - 6 (imp, back, ind merch, Brit, gn, STO) 081 770 3815

■ **Andy's Comic Cavern**, Windsor Open Market (back of Woolworth's), Bachelors Acre, Windsor. Sats only 7.30-4.00 (imp, back, ind, gn, STO) Free delivery for Windsor & Slough area. 0753 853381

■ **Atomic Comics**, 1112 High Rd, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Sat 10 -6 excl Fri 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, 2nd hand horror fantasy sf bks, original art) 081-597 8547

NEW **The Book Worm Bookshop**, 19 Horner Square, Whitechapel, London. (Within Spitalfields market) Wed-Fri 11-3.00; Sun 10-4.00 (back, ind, s-f & horror bks, s-p, Brit)

■ **Calamity Comics**, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6, Thurs & Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy tv & film bks & merch, Sega & Nintendo game cartridges, videos) 081-427 3831

■ **Calamity Comics 2**, 90 Queens Road, The Broadway, Watford, Herts WD1 2LA. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; closed Wed; Thurs & Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy tv & film bks & merch, videos) 0923 249293

■ **Comic Shack**, 720 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3NN. Mon-Thurs 9.30-5.30; Fri & Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-5.30. Also by appointment (imp, back, s-p, merch, u/g, gn, hbks) 081-539 7260/081-555 9303 (eve)

■ **Dynamic Comics**, Units 43-47 In Shops, 68 Church St, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RB. Mon - Sat 9 - 5.30 (imp, back, ind, s-p, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, merch) phone & fax 081-681 2597

■ **Edge of Forever, The**, 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-8; Sat 9-6 (imp, back, s-p merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 081-298 1363

■ **Gary's Book & Comic Stall**, Site A65, The High Street, Walthamstow, London E17. Thur + Fri 10-5; Sat 8-5.30. Tube: Walthamstow Central (imp, back, s-p, ind, gn, STO. annuals, children's books)

■ **Krypton Komics**, 252 High Rd, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Mon-Wed 10-6; Thur-Fri 9.30-7; Sat 9-6. Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, s-p, ind, gn, STO) 081-801 5378

■ **Readers Dream**, 100A Harlington Road West, Feltham (near Heathrow airport) Middx TW14 0JJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00 excl Wed - closed (imp, back, gn, STO) 081-844 0780

■ **Skinny Melink's**, 66 Loampit Vale, Lewisham, London SE13. Mon-Thur 11- 6.30; Fri 11-7; Sat 10-6.30; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, ind s-p, u/g, gn, STO) 081-318 0499

■ **South London Book Centre**, 18-19 Stockwell Street, Greenwich, London SE10 9JN. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat & Sun 9am-5.30pm (imp, back, ind, gn, u/g, 2nd hand & new SF-horror-fantasy novels, art bks, bargain bks, remainders) 081 659 9714 or 081 853 2151

■ **Stateside Comics PLC**, 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, Herts EN4 8RF. Mon-Wed 10.00-7.00; Thur-Fri 10.00-8.00; Sat 9.00-6.00; Sun 10.00-3.00 (later by appointment). (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, tv-film & fantasy, gn, STO) 081-449 5535

■ **They Walk Among Us**, 30 Union Court, Sheen Rd, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1AA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 excl Fri 9.30-6 (imp, merch, back, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, fantasy/s-f/horror bks, STO, sub-culture, wants lists welcomed) Phone/fax 081 948 8476

■ **30th Century Comics**, Unit 12, Putney Market (1st Floor), Putney Exchange Shopping Centre, Putney High St., London SW15 1TW. Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat 9.00-6.00; Thu 9.00-7.00 (imp, back, ind, gn STO) 081 778 8094

■ **Time Trek**, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1TR. Mon - Sat 9 - 5.30 (late Thurs to 8) (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, sf TV & film related merch, STO) 081 313 0677

■ **Westside Comics**, 392 Uxbridge Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 0EL. Mon-Sat 10-6, late Thurs-Fri to 6.30. (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO). 081-813 5019

SOUTH EAST

■ **ACE Comics**, 1 Headgate Buildings, St John's Street, Colchester, Essex C02 7AD. Mon - Sat 10.00am - 5.30pm. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts) 0206 561 912

■ **Cartoon Shop**, Upper Galleries, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Basildon, Essex. Mon - Wed & Sat 10-6, Thurs & Fri 10-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, RPG) 0268 534194

■ **Cartoon Shop, The**, 368 Chartwell West, Top Floor, Victoria Circus Shopping Centre, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, RPG) 0702 613021

NEW **Close Encounters**, 196c High St, Slough SO1 1RT (above Curries). Mon-Sat 9.30 - 6.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, videos, Trek & Star Wars merch) 0753 571799

■ **The Comic Rocket**, 75a Camden Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Mon-Wed 10.00 - 4.30; Thur-Fri 10.00 - 7.30; Sat 9.30 - 5.30 (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, gn, u/g, STO) 0892 518771

■ **Comic Showcase**, 19-20 St Clements St, Oxford. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, gn, STO) 0865-723680

● **Comics and Cards**, 84 St Mary Street, Southampton SO1 1NZ. Mon-Sat 8.00-7.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) phone/fax: 0703 235324

■ **David's Comics**, 3 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Fri 9.30-6; Sat 9-6. (imp, back, ind, u/g, Brit, STO, gn, exchange, club discount) 0273 690223

■ **Incognito Comic Shop**, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, Brit, STO, film/tv merch) phone/fax: 0227-785898

■ **Incognito Comic Shop**, 14 Starnes Court, Union St, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. Mon-Fri 10.00 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, Brit, STO, film/tv related merch) phone/fax: 0622-683642

■ **Renegade Comics**, Unit 11, Elmes Arcade, High Street, Stevenage Old Town, Herts SG1 3EF. Mon -Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, v/g, gn, STO, RPG) 0438 747468

■ **Siegi's Comics & Bags**, Unit 3, 6 Orange St, Canterbury, Kent. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, gn, STO, tv SF, gum cards, sf memorabilia) 0227 470840

■ **Slough Computers**, 245 High Street, Slough, Berks SL1 1BN. Mon-Sat 9.00-5.30. (imp, ind, gn, STO, Sega & Nintendo game carts) 0753 521594

NEW **Universal Comics**, 16 London Road, Staines. Mon - Fri 10.30 - 6.30, Sat 10 - 6.30. (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO) 0784 460300

■ **Whatever Comics**, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits) 0227 453226

■ **Wokingham Comics & Trading Cards**, Wokingham Indoor Market, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire. Sats only (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO) 0734 790441

■ **Wonderworld**, 125 Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO5 3SQ. Tues-Sat 10-2, 3-6. (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, gn, STO, FRPG & miniatures) 0705 833 272

■ **Wonderworld**, 133 St Mary Street, Southampton S01 1NX. Tues-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, FRPG & miniatures) 0703 634658

MIDLANDS

■ **Another World**, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0533 515266

■ **Another World**, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0602 484122

■ **Arrival Comics & Books**, 2 Broad Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HP. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; closed Thurs; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30. (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit) 0902-313 660

■ **Bookworm**, Unit 3, 33-39 Tower St, King's Lynn, Norfolk. Mon-Sat 11-4 (back, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, fantasy & sf, early Penguins, general fic & non-fic, records) 0553 760904/771880

■ **Central City Comics**, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn, STO) 0473 233017

■ **Comics Unlimited**, 4 Clair Court, Lime Street, Bedford MK40 1NH. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, Brit, u/g, STO, RPG) 0234 218984

■ **Comics Unlimited**, Unit 11, The Arcade, Letchworth, Hertfordshire. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, Brit, u/g, STO, RPG) 0462 480018

■ **Demon Comics**, 102 Eastgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1QT. Mon - Sat 10-6. (imp, back, merch, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, t-shirts, sci-fi models) 0452 330370

■ **Fantasy World**, 10 Market Square Arcade, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1NU. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0782 279294 (fax 0782 202381)

■ **The Final Frontier**, 29 St Nicholas Place, Leicester LE1 4LD. Mon - Fri 9.30 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.00. (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO) Established 1984 0533 514347

■ **Ground Zero**, 11 Handley Arcade, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1NQ. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.00 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, STO, accessories) 0623 22017

■ **Magic Labyrinth**, 34-36 Rutland Street, Leicester, LE1 1RD Mon - Sat 9.30 - 6.00. (imp, back, ind, gn, u/g, frgn, merch, s-p, STO, RPG) 0533 518178 fax:0533 518179

■ **Mephisto Comics**, 81 Ber Street, Norwich, NR1 3RD. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, s-p, u/g, Brit, STO) 0603 762762

■ **New Worlds**, 22 West Parade, Lincoln LN1 1JT. Mon-Sat 9.30-4.30 excl Wed - closed. (comics, bks, mags, sf & fantasy specialists) 0522 530069

NEW **Nowhere Comics**, 3 Kings Court, Bridge Street, (next to Bridge St Records) Walsall. Mon-Sat 9.00-5.30, (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, videos) 0922 643352

■ **Nostalgia & Comics**, 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon - Thurs 9.15 - 5.45, Fri + Sat 9.15 - 6.00 (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, s-p, u/g, Brit, STO) 021 643 0143

■ **Planet X**, 5 London Rd, Worcester. Now open Tues-Sat 10.00-6.00, Thurs til 8.00pm. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, STO-monthly) Phone/fax: 0905 355055

■ **Stateside Comics PLC at Virgin**, Virgin Megastore, 1st Floor, 98 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6SX. Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat 9-6; Tues 9.30-6; Thurs 9-8. (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, tv film & fantasy bks, gn, merch, STO) 021 236 5735 fax: 021 236 8153

■ **Time Zone**, 12 Fish Street (off Butcher Row), Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG) 0743 365192

■ **Zoom Comics!!**, Unit 3 Inshops Centre, 65 South Parade, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1QX Mon-Sat 9.00-5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 021 354 7500

NORTH WEST

■ **Arcadia Comics**, 12 Clarence Arcade, Stamford Street, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 7PT (next to Comet). Mon-Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, ind, horror-sf mags/bks, Dr Who, Trek, ltd merch & gn, Brit, STO, ltd toys & figures) 061 339 1816

NEW **Arcadia Comics**, 75 Oldham Rd, Rochdale, Lancs OL16 5QR Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (excl Tues 3.30 & Sat 5.00 closing) (imp, back, ind, horror-sf mags/bks, Dr Who, Trek, ltd merch & gn, Brit, STO, ltd toys & figures) 0706 713770

■ **Equinox Books**, 444 Blackburn Road, Astley Bridge, Bolton, Lancs BL1 8NL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30, Sun 9.30-4.00 (imp, back, merch, model kits, imp, manga, Trek, Dr Who) 0204 593348

■ **Imagination Station**, Unit 28, Portland Shopping Centre, Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1NT. Mon - Sat 9 - 5.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO)

■ **Odyssey 7**, 21 Hanging Ditch, Corn Exchange Buildings, Manchester M4 3ES. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm. (imp, back, sf-fantasy-horror books, postcards, videos, badges, soundtracks, stills, LF filmbooks, Star Trek, Doctor Who) 061 832 7044

■ **Odyssey 7**, Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9RN. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm (imp, back, sf-fantasy-horror novels, postcards, posters, badges, stills, LF film books, Trek, Dr Who, etc) 061 273 6666

■ **Sartori Comics**, The Assembly Rooms, King Street, Lancaster. Thurs-Sat 10.00 - 4.30pm (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 0524 733943 (after 6pm)

■ **Thunderbooks**, 332 Lytham Rd, Blackpool. 10-5.30 Tues, Thurs-Sat all year; Mon-Sun in season (closed Wed). Out of season open Wed, closed Sun-Mon. (imp, s-p, back, merch, ind, limited u/g, Brit, frgn, kits, gn, t-shirts, media collectors' items) 0253-48321

■ **Thunderbooks II**, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancs. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, limited u/g, Brit, frgn, gn, kits, t-shirts, media collectors' items) 0772-204287

■ **The Time Tunnel**, 66 Edleston Road, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 7HD. Mon - Sat 10.00am - 5.30pm excl Weds. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, model kits, toys, action figures, Doctor Who, Star Trek)

■ **Worlds Apart**, Acorn Gallery, 16 Newington (city centre), Liverpool L1 4ED. Mon - Sat (excl Wed) 10-6; Wed 12-6 (imp, back, ind, merch, s-p, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy film mags) 051 707 0839

NORTH EAST

■ **Aardvark**, Unit 2, 6/10 Blenheim Walk, opposite Leeds University, Leeds LS2 9AQ, Yorks. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, ind, gn, STO) 0924 220729

■ **Armadillo**, 16-22 Anlaby Road, Hull, North Humberside HU1 2PA. Mon-Sat 10-6; late Thur-Fri to 8 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, u/g, STO, videos, ppbks) 0482 29787

■ **Books N' Comics**, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesborough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, fantasy gn, film mags, Dr Who, Trek) 0642 249143

■ **Comicville**, Ground Floor, 54 The Arcade, The Piece Hall, Halifax HX1 1RE, Yorkshire. Tures-Fri 9.30-5; Sat 10-5 Sun 11-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits, toys, Who, Trek, videos) 0374 482186

■ **Dells Comic Shop**, 87 Kirkgate, Bradford 1, Yorkshire. Mon-Sat 9-5 excl Wed 9- 3 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, horror masks, tv fantasy mags) 0274 390 541

■ **Fantasique**, 115 High St West, Sunderland (near Joplins). Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO, fantasy bks, manga) Discount cards available. 091 565 4485

■ **Hysteria Comics**, Unit 2, The Arches, Park Road, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS24 7PH. Mon-Sat 9-5 limp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, gn, STO, film mags) 0429 236952

■ **Nu Earth Comics**, 4 Davygate Centre, York Y01 2SU. Mon - Fri 10 - 5.30; Sat 9 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, art bks) 0904 611 461

■ **Nostalgia & Comics**, 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield, Yorkshire. Mon - Fri 10.00 - 6.00; Sat 9.15 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, original art, model kits, sf & fantasy gns, horror magazines, newspaper strip compilations) 0742 769475

■ **Odyssey**, 6 Harrison Street, off Vicar Lane, Leeds LS1 6PA. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, sf - fantasy - horror bks, posters, postcards, badges, stills, Star Trek, Doctor Who, etc) 0532 426 325

■ **Sheffield Space Centre**, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield, Yorks. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.00 excl Wed. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, STO, Star Trek items) 0742 758905

■ **Skyrack Book Service**, 51 The Superstore, Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8LY. Yorkshire. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5pm; excl Weds: 9.30am - 1pm. (imp, back, ind, Brit, STO, SF hbk gn & magazines - many pulps) Establ 1965.

■ **The Last Picture Show**, 40 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thur 10-8, Fri 10-9, Sat 9-7, Sun 12-5. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, film-rock memorabilia) 0742 569604

WEST COUNTRY

■ **Comics & CDs**, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 7.00. (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, RPG, u/g, Brit, original art) 0272 244655

■ **Floppy Tongue Comics**, 96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7QY. Mon-Fri 11.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 0722 331107

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn St., Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Fri 10.00-5.30, Sat 10.00-6.00 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film & tv, videos, STO) 0272 298692

■ **The Hobbit Hole**, 9 Commercial Road, Gloucester. Mon 12-5.30; Tues-Sat 10-5.30. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, gn, STO, T-shirts, film-tv mags + merch) 0452 309 533

■ **Joy's Comics**, 25 High East Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1EZ. Mon - Sun 7.30 - 6. (imp back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn) 0305 269737 (after 6pm 833304)

■ **Kathies Comics**, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon - Fri 9.30 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 0752 257800

■ **Maelstrom Comics**, St Nicholas Market, Corn Street, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5. (imp, back, s-p, small merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO)

■ **Purple Haze**, 58 Eastlake Walk, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL1 1BX (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 0752 254136

■ **Wonderworld**, 803 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 6AP. Tues-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, FRPG & miniatures, Games Workshop specialist stockist) 0202 422 964

ISLE OF WIGHT

■ **Astounding Comics**, 61 Pyle Street, Newport, Isle of Wight P030 1UL. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, videos) 0983 525320

WALES

■ **Cardiff Fantasy Centre**, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sats only 9.30-5 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, gn, STO, videos; establ 12 yrs) 0222 563005

■ **Comics & Collectibles**, Stall 69, Pontypridd Indoor Market, Mid-Gmaorgan, South Wales. Wed, Fri, Sat 9.30- 4.30. (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, model kits, tradsing card specialists)

■ **Comix Shoppe**, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film/tv mags, RPG, Games Workshop stockists) 0792 642097

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 excl Thurs 10.00 - 6.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn, STO) 0222 228885

■ **Journey into Mystery**, The Emporium, 34 Castle Arcade, Cardiff. Tues - Fri 11.00 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, gn, STO, indie records & cds)

■ **Negative Zone**, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon - Sat 9.00am - 5.00pm. (imp, back, s-p, ind, gn, Brit, STO) 0633 222159

SCOTLAND

■ **The Adventure Zone**, 280 High St, Glasgow G4 0QR. Mon-Wed 9.30-6, Thurs 9.30-7, Fri-Sat 9.30-6, Sun 10-5 (imp, back, ind, Brit, u/g, STO, frgn, s-p, s-f bks, tv-related supplies, videos, models, memorabilia, Who, Trek, etc 041-946 7607 (after 7pm)

■ **AKA Books & Comics**, 25 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5RJ. Mon-Sat 10-5; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn) 041 552 6692

■ **All Winners**, 27 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh EH1 2QG. Mon -Sat 10-5.30; Sun 1-5 (trading card specialists: sport & non-sport + mags) 031 226 2774

■ **Black Hole Comic Shop**, The Market Hall, Wellgate Centre, Dundee. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, ind, u/g, STO) 0382 21037

■ **City Centre Comics**, 31-35 Parnie St, Glasgow G1. Mon-Sat 10.00-5.30, Sun 12-5. (back issues only) 041 552 6692 or 041-632 2786 after 6pm

■ **Earth 2 Comics**, Argyle Shopping Centre, 28 Argyle St, Glasgow G2 8AD. Mon-Fri 10.00-5.00; Sat 10-5.30. (back, gn, ind, merch) 041-647 6810 (after 6pm)

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 2 - 3 Teviot Place, Edinburgh, EH1 2QZ. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30, excl Thurs till 6.30. (imp, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, gn, STO) 031-225 8613

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■ **Plan 9 Comics**, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB1 1NE. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30 (Thurs till 8), Sun 1 - 5. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, RPG specialist, board games, figures, STO) 0224 624467

■ **Stateside Comics PLC at Virgin**, 28-32 Union Street, Glasgow, G2 7LZ. Mon, Wed, Fri & Sat 9-6; Tues 9.30-6; Thurs 9-7; Sun 12-5.30. (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, Brit, gn, STO) 041 221 2915; Fax 041 221 2916

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Big Comics**, 126-128 Donegall Pass, Belfast BT7 1BZ. Saturday 9.30 - 5.00 only (back issues: '60s to present) 0232-715205 (eves)/0232 232041 (Sats)

■ **Dark Horizons**, 30a Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4LD (near City Hall) Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, subculture, film mags) 0232-233808

■ **Talisman Comics**, 47 Winetavern Street, Belfast BT1 1JQ Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 0232-438744

CHANNEL ISLANDS

■ **Music & Video Exchange**, 11a La Motte Street, St Helier, Jersey. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00 (back, ind, Brit, u/g, records, videos, hi-fi) 0534 36606

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Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry.

As such, the opinions stated do not necessarily reflect those of the publication, and space will be given in subsequent issues to opposing views. Editing of accepted manuscripts will be done only as a matter of grammar, clarity and space consideration.

Restriction, censorship and video nazis

Comment by Iain Simmons, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottingham

SO Michael Howard has performed another of his manifold U-turns and recanted on yet another hastily prepared Government policy. Only this time we are being attacked to the very core of our democracy. The laws of censorship are to be further tightened. To protect the children.

There is something deeply unsettling about this concern that many politicians seem to wear on their sleeves for the young and innocent, or, as is the general assumption, the young and gullible. There is a deeply insidious evil to what they are doing. Fascism thinly veiled under the excuse that "it's for the kids." The story we are being forced to believe is that a greater number of `video nasties' are now available for the young to watch and for some reason find enjoyable. This immoral depravity and debauchery which they endured then leads them onto the streets to commit crimes and gradually gnaw away the very foundations of our wonderful country. I mean it must be true, just look at the Jamie Bulger case.

Now, I apologise to any friends and relatives of the unfortunate master Bulger, for once more dragging their son into some sort of limelight, however most of the blame for the current, it can scarcely be called 'debate', regarding videos, of whatever genre, can be laid at the feet, or, more specifically, hands of his murderers. It is purely and simply because they had just watched *Child's Play 3* that they went out and killed Jamie. It's true, the Judge said so.

What has not been so widely reported is that Inspector Ray Simpson, of the Merseyside Police, said "If you are going to link this murder to a film, you might as well link it to *The Railway Children*." Also overlooked is that the police looked at all the videos in the murderers' houses and checked lists of rentals from the shops. They were unable to find *Child's Play 3*, nor any other film which might have encouraged them to do what they did. The plain and simple fact that we all seem unable to face is that the two boys killed Jamie Bulger because they could. Nothing more and nothing less. It is very possible to draw parallels between the atrocities committed and scenes from *Child's Play 3*, many newspapers did. However the most the film provided was method, not cause. It is quite possible that, had they just watched *Home Alone*, they might have dropped a length of drain pipe on the poor kid's head.

Of course the jewel in the crown of the censor's arguments is that how can we say that television and the media has no effect upon the viewer, no matter how old, when the constant slurry of advertisements we are subjected to, obviously work? The blinkers seem to be getting in the way here, how can we compare a thirty second commercial with a two hour long film? The motives behind both are dissimilar in every respect, except the reaping of great profits. Adverts are designed to have an effect on us, not sell us a soap powder. Of course adverts are designed to have an effect on us, they are redundant otherwise. Films are made firstly to entertain us, not sell us soap powder. Of course adverts affect us more, however they are hardly mass entertainment. (The claim that adverts are the most entertaining thing on television nowadays speaks more about the current programming, rather than the adverts themselves.)

Although Professor Elizabeth Newton's nine page 'report' to the M.P. David Alton (who proclaims to be both a Liberal and a Democrat), did say that we might have been naive in our failure to predict screen violence on the young, it was not backed up with any new research, just the same old rhetoric rewritten in her own words. The survey by the psychologist Ann Hagell, (**Young Offenders and the Media**), together with Tim Newbury, has been generally hushed up — despite the fact it was commissioned by the British Board of Film Classification, the BBC, the Broadcasting Standards Council and the Independent Television Commission. Since when did a professor of Child Development hold more sway than the combined might of the major broadcasting companies?

Perhaps it's because their report pointed out that there was no real difference between the viewing habits of persistent young offenders and those of a 'normal' teenager. The only noticeable difference being that *The Bill* was a preferred soap amongst the offenders, as opposed to *Home and Away* amongst the non-convicted. Should we consider banning *Dixon of Dock Green*?

The fact is that for many, many years we have been clambering over

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ourselves to find some excuses for what, for want of a better phrase, we can call the Human Condition. Videos can just join the ever growing list of bad influences' that we can all cower behind, fearing for our safety. It's a wonder we even survived this long, what with all that rock music, Heavy Metal music, Punk Rock music, motorbikes, bad haircuts, television, video games, winkle pickers and, of course, comics corrupting our ever so sensitive minds. I find it highly insulting and infuriating that a generation that spawned the Kray twins, Dennis Nielson, Michael Ryan, Peter Sutcliffe and not forgetting the Anglo/Irish war, the Falklands war and the Gulf War, to name but a few, has the audacity to tell me what might affect me adversely, and what I can and cannot watch.

The fear is that these people are able to ride the back of concerned parents and such like, to impose their own warped view of morality. For all the harm that violent films, videos, games, books and comics might do, they also have an enormous value as a cathartic medium. Reservoir Dogs does not compel me to stage an armed robbery on a jeweller's shop, not to torture policemen to the refrains of classic sixties tunes. What it does provide me with a highly enjoyable couple of hours, from which I emerge, to a greater or lesser degree, calmer. I don't need to kill anyone. Harvey Keitel and Tim Roth have just pretended to do that for me.

The knee-jerk reaction of simply banning anything you don't like is both pathetic and cowardly. What angers me most about the new regulation is that it is purely political. Not concern, but a mock concern. Local elections loom and we must all look our best. I would have more conviction voting for a party that pledged to educate people as to how to cope with such material, rather than educating us to be self centred, hedonistic 'individuals', putting ourselves before society.

Yet these people already have their teeth sunk well and truly into the video market and their claws are already scratching at video games (certificates have been suggested), and they will soon be on the look out for other victims. Perhaps the time has come to fight back, before they destroy another part of our culture and wrest control of another part of our media. The only reason these people have got so powerful is that no one has ever stood up and countered their arguments in any great numbers. There is no anti-Mary Whitehouse who stands up and shouts whenever another example of censorship knocks another chink in our already depleted armour.

We must start to educate, both the young and the old, to distinguish between reality and fiction, whether it's on the screen or the page. We must speak out in greater numbers when a work of great art is suppressed because it contains blood or gore. We must prise open the closed minds and redraw the lines.

We are already living in one of the most restrictive, censored countries in Europe. We must pray we are not too late.

Experiences in retail

Comment by Lou Bank, Dark Horse, Oregon, USA

IN response to Phil Hall (*Comment*, **Comics International** #41):

Racking techniques and display techniques do not necessarily require the purchase of a single additional item to one's store. The entire premise behind genre racking is simply rack similar items together, the point of which is to help make an additional sale of a related item through visibility.

Comic stores receive as many as 700 new items every month, and there is no way on Earth that any consumer, regardless of how many catalogues, fanzines, and business magazines he reads, will be able to be aware of all of those items.

It is also likely that, regardless of how many ads a publisher places, the majority of comic fans will not see that ad. And then, if they see it, you're relying on the fact that they bother to pay attention to it at all.

A comic like **Aliens** could be a very easy sell to someone who is, say, a **Venom** fan. But that **Venom** fan may well not realise that is the case, if he even realises that **Aliens** exists as a comic book. Racking the two comics more closely together helps not only to make that comic visible, but also to create a common bond between the two in the mind of the consumer and therefore makes it more likely that he will pay attention to that comic.

Retailers don't have enough time in the day or memory in their heads to suggest-sell everything in their stores to the proper comics. Racking is the shorthand to doing that, and the safety net to the retailer.

Concerning group advertising, there are a number of retailers here in the States that share ads all the time, and the opportunity to do so in London is even greater than it is in the USA. London is an extremely expansive city, which means that the newspapers receive a very wide circulation, making it cost prohibitive to run an ad as a stand alone store; you would, in essence, find 99% of the people viewing the ad are likely to be too far away from your store to bother ever visiting it. The same goes for radio. But by grouping ads with comics stores too far away to be competitive, and yet still in the same newspaper distribution or broadcast region, you in essence become as cost effective as a chain of comic stores.

What are my credentials to be giving advice to retailers? Well, I've never put my own money into opening my own comics store, but I did manage a store in Chicago early in my career. And I worked as a distributor for three years, during

which time I became acutely aware of retailer concerns and problems.

But most importantly, I've worked in comics publishing for seven years, and during that time I've seen more comics stores than most people will in their lifetimes. I talk to six stores a week on average, and they tell me what works for them and what doesn't. I'm not claiming to be some kind of retailing guru; all I'm doing is passing on success stories from one retailer to other retailers who are looking to solve problems.

As for your suggestion that retailers should be given an opportunity to tell publishers how they should do their jobs: Phil, how long have I known you? During that time, how often have you succeeded in cornering me at a convention or trade show; on the phone; or even over dinner to give me a piece of your mind?

When I go to shows, I spend most of my time listening to retailer complaints about which ever company I happen to be representing at the time (hah!), and I'd like to think I'm very open to suggestions.

At Marvel, I instituted a number of policies, made a number of decisions, and created a number of programs based on the suggestions made by retailers. Soliciting non-enhanced versions of enhanced comics; making product returnable when it shipped more than 30 days after solicited ship date; reprinting umpteen number of sold-out comics; and the content-formatting of annuals and bi-weeklies all came from retailer feedback, as well as many other things that would be truly too cumbersome to list.

So back at ya, Mr Hall!

The buggo minority goes macho!

Comment by Gillian Jaysmith, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent

LAID-BACK attitudes, part 1: readers JG, GJ and AB write to **Comics International**. JG slags off **Doom Patrol**. GJ slags off JG for not being qualified to comment. AB slags off GJ for her duff argument. Apparently, if you find something in the street and you're not sure whether it's diamond or glass, it doesn't matter whether you take it to Covent Garden or Hatton Garden for a valuation. Oh. Well, I know, that's the main thing.

Laid-back attitudes, part 2: elderly comics professional AR, an artist, slags off professional NG, a writer. Professional IG slags off AR. IG's comments include "although perfectly entitled to display his ignorance and naivete in public, AR has skidded headlong into complete moronism." Hint: AR's name begins with "Arthur Rans". (And he's not that much older than me, so watch it, Goldkind, or your life won't begin at forty!) Interestingly, reader AB didn't pass judgment on IG's comments about AR's absence of writing qualifications. Well, you can't comment on everything.

Seems professionals don't like "ignorant, naive, moronic" commentary from peers. What do they make of it from fans? In 1983 some editor called Dez printed this letter: I have noticed with some dismay that comics attract the intellectually stunted and emotionally warped... I've read thousands of letters which exhibited indications of mental instability... this was a text-book example of the glib, slick, slimy half-baked notions harboured by some so-called fans, whose only pleasure in expressing their lamentable opinions is to see their name in print, totally disregarding the nature of comics, the process of creativity, or the feelings of individuals. This from Steve Parkhouse in **Warrior** 12 (available for £1.50 from Dez's Bargain Basement—cheaper than a copy of **Battleground**!). Steve was furious with comments like "Paul Neary ruins everyone's pencils" or "his stories are too stupid to be believed". Who needs sarcasm or irony to make a point? He's talking about us.

Gillian on a pedestal? Hey, I don't dispute that plenty of non-professionals possess critical faculties, nor that Stan Lee is hardly the man to ask about Marvel's quality. However, Andy Brewer's opinions in **Comics International** #41 (*Comment*; *The Right of the Purchaser as a Critic*) confuses the issue. Lee's unbiased opinion on a comic would be more useful than yours or mine simply because he's been working in comics for longer. That seems reasonable, doesn't it? Every book review in the **Sunday Times** is by an 'appropriate' professional. Ask me about sculpting and I'll refer you to my friend who makes a living from it, but go to him for advice on computers and he'll send you to me. (Or I might already be in his studio, since he makes my pedestals.)

Of course Lee has vested interests in Marvel comics so his opinion isn't unbiased. Still, had I gone by the opinions of Jim Graham (**Comics International** #37) or Don Thompson (paraphrased in **Spawn** #18, which doubtless everyone possesses) or Andy Brewer (**Comics International** #41), I'd have assured that Rachel's **Doom Patrol** was uncreative, unoriginal, poorly-written crap. Andy lauds these opinions as independent. Can I trust them? Nope. Rachel's **DP** is the highlight of my comics life. (And don't tell me what this says about my comics life, because I'll just get a couple of guys, and you'll get a couple of guys, and we'll spend the whole night in a slugfest...)

I'm fed up with intolerant personal opinions masquerading as logical factual arguments. I'm also

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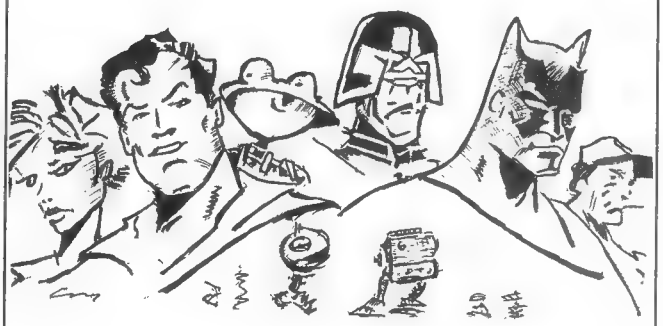

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disillusioned over independence. Up on my pedestal outside Plato's cave, independence is wonderful. But it casts a poor shadow down here. Everyone has a vested interest, whether financial or something emotional to do with influencing people into liking your favourite things.

The instinct to recommend is common. I'm not immune. I recommend **Doom Patrol** to everyone I meet (which can sometimes make for a hell of a train trip). I hope this does only good. But recently I went further: I stopped making negative comments on Vertigo material which I don't like. Plenty of people enjoy it; why put off potential readers? Andy, however, doesn't pass up the chance for a quick Rachel-bash. Strange to tell, he edits a fanzine which (presumably) celebrates comics, but there's his negative opinion, stated so assertively that disagreement almost implies that I'm — well, a buggo minority. Andy: if I and twenty friends bought **Battleground**, and we all told you it was crap, giving reasons with which you disagreed... would you dismiss our criticism as juvenile or worthless, and ignore us as long as we kept purchasing? Or would you wilt, concluding that we buyers had the right to tell you that your personal effort was worthless?

Dez: your liberal letters pages in **Warrior**, **Comics International** and such are great things. But isn't it a bit much to say, as you did then, that we should "enjoy the things for what they are" but still run letters by Jim Graham, Andy Brewer, me, and 'most everybody else"?

We should indulge and enjoy, and everyone's entitled to an opinion, but you can't expect people to take opinions seriously unless they're authoritive, and authority comes not from the dictionary or sarcasm but from experience. (Or from natural talent, true... but I don't grant a special disposition for natural critical talent to every Jim, Don or Andy — just as they don't grant me one.)

Unauthoritive criticism is hot air which probably harms the ice caps. Our letters simply add to the heap of banal, nasty, superfluous comics criticism — which partly keeps you in the money, Dez, and indulges everyone's lust for verbal violence. (Heaven only knows how many penises I'd cut off if I didn't have this outlet for my suppressed rage.) But the question remains: are our printed opinions as necessary as our purchasing opinions, let alone as necessary as the comics themselves? Or put another way: have you ever seen three kids club together to buy an issue of **Comics International**? If you have, tell John Ney Reiber right now.

I don't mean that only comics professionals should express verbal opinions; just that non-professionals should expect little notice to be taken of theirs. Now does this hurt anyone's ego? Diddums. Our opinions have hurt people before now. You could learn to take it, or you could learn that there are other, more pleasant, ways to live. Is it any wonder artists in most fields have no time for critics? I didn't invent that stuff about "those who can, do", y'know. Still, who cares what I think? Yes I'm a daft woman who doesn't know what she's talking about, yes everyone's opinion is equally valuable, yes every self-published British comic is wonderful and far better than Marvel's worst, yes Grant Morrison is God, yes aliens mowed my lawn...

No. I recant. I don't want a shouting contest or yet more visceral letters to my home address. This buggo minority shuts down, with honest apologies to anyone slighted by my barbs. Lou Bank's letter was heartening to read. He wants to be positive and he says after being big enough to admit an earlier error. I'd like to emulate him, so I'm retracting my negativity regarding Vertigo and "bland" superheroics. And from now on I'll stay in the zone of people who are either pleasant or silent. I prefer the company.

I remind you that there are only 200+ days to Christmas, so practise random kindness and commit senseless acts of beauty, and touch base with humanity, as many of you need to. (And that's not my opinion. Someone called Grant said it in **Comic World**.)

More than joined-up letters

Comment by D. R. Booth, Walton, Liverpool

I AM a writer! I can put pen to paper or type the correct combination of letters into a word processor or typewriter. I can write postcards and letters, therefore I can write Marvel comics. QED. Simple, I think I'll start tomorrow.

After all, the likes of Nicieza, Kavanagh, Mackie, Lobdell, Moore (John Francis, not affable Al), Slott, Lackey, Jones and Kaminski would probably have a hard time getting a letter printed in an Image comic let alone capable of sustaining Marvel Comics through a period of unparalled creative crisis.

The vast majority of this little mob have been or are still editors. Demeans the title "editor" a tad, don't you think?

So few Marvel titles are actually marvel-ous nowadays.

But is this lack of writing ability really such a bad thing? Image has built an empire on it.

I would like to think that Marvel, if they do get a new supremo, will start thinking about strong writing, because at the moment the only thing that the stories are complementing is the sad artwork.

Let's hope that whoever edits Marvel Comics in the years to come will have the foresight to get rid of the rubbish and try something different with its tired old characters.

So, tomorrow I will become a writer and if that fails there is always crochet.

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COMICS ECONOMICS

The direct sale market now represents over 85% of US comics publishers sales revenue. The following shows the top titles ordered through the four leading UK & US direct sales distributors. As such it does not reflect retail sales, but instead total orders placed by traders anticipating their retail sales three months ahead. *compiled by Phil Hall*

Direct Market trade order charts: May 1994 titles

Titan Distributors (UK) Top 50 Titles

1	X-Men 34 ($1.50)	Marvel	26	Force Works 1 ($2.95)	Marvel
2	Uncanny X-Men 314 ($1.50)	Marvel	27	Daredevil 330 ($1.50)	Marvel
3	Spawn 22 ($1.95)	Image	28	Spider-Man 2099 21 ($1.50)	Marvel
4	Sandman 62 ($1.95)	DC	29	Catwoman 12 ($1.75)	DC
5	X-Force 36 ($1.50)	Marvel	30	Fantastic Four 390 ($1.50)	Marvel
6	Violator 1 ($1.95)	Image	31	Superman 91 ($1.50)	DC
7	X-Factor 104 ($1.50)	Marvel	32	Action Comics 701 ($2.95)	DC
8	WildC.A.T.s 11 ($2.50)	Image	33	Adventures/Superman 514 ($1.50)	DC
9	Wolverine 83 ($1.95)	Marvel	34	Superman Man of Steel 35 ($1.50)	DC
10	Cyclops/Phoenix 2 ($2.95)	Marvel	35	Lobo 7 ($1.75)	DC
11	Batman 509 ($1.50)	DC	36	Maxx 9 ($1.95)	Image
12	Legends/Dark Knight 62 ($1.75)	DC	37	Spider-Man/X-Factor 2 ($1.95)	Marvel
13	Superman/Doomsday 3 ($4.95)	DC	38	Robin 7 ($1.50)	DC
14	X-Men 2099 #10 ($1.50)	Marvel	39	Deathblow 4 ($1.95)	Image
15	Hellblazer 79 ($1.75)	DC	40	Deathblow 5 ($1.95)	Image
16	Detective Comics 676 ($1.50)	DC	41	Lobo Contract on Gawd 4 ($1.95)	DC
17	Previews vol 4 #5 ($2.00)	Diamond	42	Spider-Man 48 ($1.95)	Marvel
18	Martha Washington 1 ($2.95)	Dark Horse	43	Lobo Annual 2 ($2.95)	DC
19	Excalibur 79 ($1.95)	Marvel	44	Gen-13 #4 ($2.50)	Image
20	Shadow of the Bat 29 ($1.75)	DC	45	Avengers 376 ($1.50)	Marvel
21	Cable 13 ($2.00)	Marvel	46	Stormwatch 25 ($2.50)	Image
22	Cyberforce 5 ($1.95)	Image	47	Silver Surfer 94 ($1.50)	Marvel
23	Incredible Hulk 419 ($1.50)	Marvel	48	Shade the Changing Man 49 ($1.95)	DC
24	Amazing Spider-Man 391 ($1.50)	Marvel	49	Books of Magic 3 ($1.95)	DC
25	Aliens/Predator 6 ($2.95)	Dark Horse	50	Superboy 6 ($1.50)	DC

First Choice Wholesale (UK) Top 50 Titles

1	Violator 1 ($1.95)	Image	26	Aliens/Predator 6 ($2.95)	Dark Horse
2	Spawn 22 ($1.95)	Image	27	Lobo: Contract on Gawd 4 ($1.75)	DC
3	X-Men 34 ($1.50)	Marvel	28	Incredible Hulk 419 ($1.50)	Marvel
4	Uncanny X-Men 314 ($1.50)	Marvel	29	Force Works 1 ($2.95)	Marvel
5	Sandman 62 ($1.95)	DC	30	Maxx 9 ($1.95)	Image
6	Superman/Doomsday 3 ($4.95)	DC	31	Superboy 6 ($1.50)	DC
7	Batman 509 ($1.50)	DC	32	Rune 5 ($1.95)	Malibu
8	Wolverine 83 ($1.75)	Marvel	33	Action Comics 701 ($1.50)	DC
9	Simpsons 4 ($1.95)	Bongo	34	Cable 13 ($2.00)	Marvel
10	X-Force 36 ($1.50)	Marvel	35	Cyberforce 5 ($1.95)	Image
11	Hellblazer 79 ($1.95)	DC	36	Martha Washington 1 ($2.95)	Dark Horse
12	Shadow of the Bat 29 ($1.75)	DC	37	Superman 91 ($1.50)	DC
13	Detective Comics 676 ($1.50)	DC	38	Star Wars Droids 2 ($2.50)	Dark Horse
14	X-Factor 104 ($1.50)	Marvel	39	Amazing Spider-Man 391 ($1.50)	Marvel
15	WildC.A.T.s 11 ($2.50)	Image	40	X-Men 2099 #10 ($1.50)	Marvel
16	Legends/Dark Knight 62 ($1.75)	DC	41	Adventures/Superman 514 ($1.50)	DC
17	Daredevil 330 ($1.50)	Marvel	42	Fantastic Four 390 ($1.50)	Marvel
18	Robin 8 ($1.50)	DC	43	Steel 6 ($1.50)	DC
19	Lobo 7 ($1.75)	DC	44	Excalibur 79 ($1.95)	Marvel
20	Cyclops & Phoenix 3 ($2.95)	Marvel	45	Spider-Man 2099 #21 ($1.50)	Marvel
21	Catwoman 12 ($1.50)	DC	46	Witchcraft 2 ($1.95)	DC
22	Books of Magic 3 ($1.95)	DC	47	Star Trek DS9 #10 ($1.95)	Malibu
23	Lobo Annual 2 ($2.95)	DC	48	Avengers 376 ($1.50)	Marvel
24	Superman Man of Steel 35 ($1.50)	DC	49	Shade the Changing Man 49 ($1.95)	DC
25	Aliens Stronghold 1 ($2.50)	Dark Horse	50	Warstrike 1 ($1.95)	Malibu

Diamond Distributors (US) Top 50 Titles

1	Spawn 22 ($1.95)	Image	26	Robin 8 ($1.50)	DC
2	X-Men 34 ($1.50)	Marvel	27	Force Works 1 ($2.95)	Marvel
3	Violator 1 ($1.95)	Image	28	Catwoman 12 ($1.75)	DC
4	Uncanny X-Men 314 ($1.50)	Marvel	29	Maxx 9 ($1.95)	Image
5	Superman/Doomsday 3 ($4.95)	DC	30	Superboy 6 ($1.50)	DC
6	Wolverine 83 ($1.95)	Marvel	31	Cable 13 ($2.00)	Marvel
7	WildC.A.T.s 11 ($2.50)	Image	32	Starwatchers 1 ($2.95)	Valiant
8	Batman 509 ($1.50)	DC	33	Deathblow 4 ($1.95)	Image
9	Cyclops/Phoenix 2 ($2.95)	Marvel	34	Spider-Man 48 ($1.95)	Marvel
10	Superman Man of Steel 35 ($1.50)	DC	35	Worlds Collide 1 ($2.95)	DC
11	Action Comics 701 ($1.50)	DC	36	Deathblow 5 ($1.95)	Image
12	X-Force 36 ($1.50)	Marvel	37	Kindred 3 ($1.95)	Image
13	Superman 91 ($1.50)	DC	38	Venom: The Mace 3 ($2.95)	Marvel
14	Adventures/Superman 514 ($1.50)	DC	39	Steel 6 ($1.50)	DC
15	X-Men 2099 #10 ($1.50)	Marvel	40	Spider-Man 2099 #21 ($1.50)	Marvel
16	Cyberforce 5 ($1.95)	Image	41	Brigade 25 ($2.50)	Image
17	Gen-13 #4 ($2.50)	Image	42	Green Lantern 53 ($1.50)	DC
18	X-Factor 104 ($1.50)	Marvel	43	Codename: Strykeforce 4 ($1.95)	Image
19	Detective Comics 676 ($1.50)	DC	44	Team Youngblood 9 ($1.95)	Image
20	Prophet 7 ($1.95)	Image	45	Excalibur 79 ($1.95)	Marvel
21	Amazing Spider-Man 391 ($2.95)	Marvel	46	Fantastic Four 390 ($1.50)	Marvel
22	Beavis & Butt-Head 5 ($1.95)	Marvel	47	Bloodstrike 25 ($2.50)	Image
23	Stormwatch 25 ($2.50)	Image	48	Sandman 62 ($1.95)	DC
24	Shadow of the Bat 29 ($1.75)	DC	49	Supreme 25 ($2.50)	Image
25	Legends/Dark Knight 62 ($1.75)	DC	50	Incredible Hulk 419 ($2.50)	Marvel

Capital City Distribution (US) Top 50 Titles

1	Spawn 22 ($1.95)	Image	26	Robin 7 ($1.50)	DC
2	X-Men 34 ($1.50)	Marvel	27	Legends/Dark Knight 62 ($1.75)	DC
3	Violator 1 ($1.95)	Image	28	Superboy 6 ($1.50)	DC
4	Uncanny X-Men 314 ($1.50)	Marvel	29	Stormwatch 10 ($1.95)	Image
5	Wolverine 83 ($1.95)	Marvel	30	Maxx 9 ($1.95)	Image
6	Superman/Doomsday 3 ($4.95)	DC	31	Kindred 3 ($1.95)	Image
7	WildC.A.T.s 11 ($2.50)	Image	32	Cable 13 ($2.00)	Marvel
8	Batman 509 ($1.50)	DC	33	Spider-Man 48 ($1.95)	Marvel
9	Superman Man of Steel 35 ($1.50)	DC	34	Green Lantern 54 ($1.50)	DC
10	X-Force 36 ($1.50)	Marvel	35	Deathblow 5 ($1.95)	Image
11	Superman 91 ($1.50)	DC	36	Deathblow 4 ($1.95)	Image
12	Cyclops & Phoenix 3 ($2.95)	Marvel	37	Starwatchers 1 ($2.95)	Valiant
13	Adventures/Superman 514 ($1.50)	DC	38	Worlds Collide 1 ($2.95)	DC
14	Action Comics 701 ($1.50)	DC	39	Spider-Man 2099 #21 ($1.50)	Marvel
15	X-Men 2099 #10 ($1.50)	Marvel	40	Steel 6 ($1.50)	DC
16	X-Factor 104 ($1.50)	Marvel	41	Venom The Mace 3 ($2.95)	Marvel
17	Cyberforce 5 ($1.95)	Image	42	Daredevil 330 ($1.50)	Marvel
18	Gen-13 #4 ($2.50)	Image	43	Codename Stryke Force 4 ($1.95)	Image
19	Detective Comics 676 ($1.50)	DC	44	Spider-Man/X-Factor 3 ($1.95)	Marvel
20	Force Works 1 ($2.95)	Marvel	45	Hulk 419 ($2.50)	Marvel
21	Beavis & Butt-Head 5 ($1.95)	Marvel	46	Fantastic Four 390 ($1.50)	Marvel
22	Prophet 7 ($1.95)	Image	47	Team Youngblood 9 ($1.95)	Image
23	Amazing Spider-Man 391 ($1.50)	Marvel	48	Brigade 25 ($2.50)	Image
24	Catwoman 12 ($1.75)	DC	49	Excalibur 79 ($1.95)	Marvel
25	Shadow of the Bat 29 ($1.75)	DC	50	Sandman 62 ($1.95)	DC

Comics International Top 50: May 1994

WHILE the facing page's charts for the two major US distributors and their UK equivalents throw up interesting differences between buying trends in each country, to overview the total ordering, **Comics International** produces its own top fifty chart. The only combined chart in the industry.

Taking the order levels from each company and factoring in the size of each operation, we are able to produce a chart reflecting the entire month with far greater accuracy than those produced for the record, film or book industry.

As always, this represents the trade orders for titles — meaning retailers believe they can sell the books they are ordering. Whether consumers choose to buy them is a different matter. (Key: re = re-entry)

1	(2)	Spawn 22 ($1.95)	Image
2	(1)	X-Men 34 ($1.50)	Marvel
3	(new)	Violator 1 ($1.95)	Image
4	(3)	Uncanny X-Men 314 ($1.50)	Marvel
5	(4)	Superman/Doomsday 3 ($4.95)	DC
6	(7)	Wolverine 83 ($1.95)	Marvel
7	(8)	WildC.A.T.s 11 ($1.95)	Image
8	(19)	Batman 509 ($1.50)	DC
9	(17)	Superman Man of Steel 35 ($1.50)	DC
10	(9)	Adventures/Cyclops & Phoenix 3 ($2.95)	Marvel
11	(8)	X-Force 36 ($1.50)	Marvel
12	(15)	Superman 90 ($1.50)	DC
13	(6)	Action Comics 701 ($1.50)	DC
14	(16)	Adventures of Superman 514 ($1.50)	DC
15	(18)	X-Men 2099 #10 ($1.50)	Marvel
16	(20)	X-Factor 104 ($1.50)	Marvel
17	(21)	Cyberforce 5 ($1.95)	Image
18	(28)	Gen-13 #4 ($2.50)	Image
19	(14)	Detective Comics 676 ($1.50)	DC
20	(38)	Prophet 7 ($1.95)	Image
21	(13)	Amazing Spider-Man 391 ($1.50)	Marvel
22	(23)	Beavis & Butt-Head 5 ($1.95)	Marvel
23	(new)	Force Works 1 ($2.95)	Marvel
24	(27)	Shadow of the Bat 28 ($1.75)	DC
25	(33)	Legends of the Dark Knight 62 ($1.75)	DC
26	(25)	Robin 8 ($1.50)	DC
27	(34)	Stormwatch 25 ($1.95)	Image
28	(50)	Catwoman 12 ($1.75)	DC
29	(39)	Superboy 6 ($1.50)	DC
30	(re)	Maxx 9 ($1.95)	Image
31	(26)	Cable 13 ($2.00)	Marvel
32	(22)	Spider-Man 48 ($1.95)	Marvel
33	(41)	Kindred 3 ($2.50)	Image
34	(re)	Deathblow 4 ($1.95)	Image
35	(new)	Worlds Collide 1 ($2.95)	DC
36	(re)	Deathblow 5 ($1.95)	Image
37	(31)	Green Lantern 53 ($1.50)	DC
38	(new)	Starwatchers 1 ($2.95)	Valiant
39	(35)	Venom The Mace 3 ($2.95)	Marvel
40	(33)	Spider-Man 2099 #20 ($1.50)	Marvel
41	(re)	Steel 6 ($1.50)	DC
42	(re)	Codename: Stryke Force 4 ($1.95)	Image
43	(44)	Excalibur 79 ($1.95)	Marvel
44	(47)	Sandman 62 ($1.95)	DC
45	(24)	Incredible Hulk 419 ($1.50)	Marvel
46	(45)	Fantastic Four 390 ($1.50)	Marvel
47	(re)	Daredevil 330 ($1.50)	Marvel
48	(re)	Team Youngblood 9 ($2.50)	Image
49	(re)	Brigade 25 ($2.50)	Image
50	(49)	Spider-Man/X-Factor 3 ($1.95)	Marvel

Marvel Comics one-time domination of the top 50 looks on shakey ground at the moment. The company has dropped a mammoth 10% in the chart share, their worst show for 5 months.

Holding only four of the top 10 for the first time in four months, the poor performance is largely due to significant events with the **Superman** and **Batman** families of comics.

X-Men 2099 broke from its recent trend of slipping down the charts and moved back up 3 places, while **Beavis & Butt-Head** — which looked destined to slide down and disappear out of the charts — has crept back up one place this month. **X-Factor**, Marvel's yo-yo title, also rose up the charts and **Excalibur**, regarded by some as the mutant titles poor relation, continues its recent trend of picking up sales.

Marvel's highest new entry (at #20) is the oft resolicited **Force Works** #1 and was Marvel's only new entry. **Daredevil**'s recent popularity has enabled it to break back into the chart.

As predicted in last month's *Comic Economics*, **The Incredible Hulk** has dipped on its recent form. Due, possibly, to the inclusion of a fill-in artist for rapidly rising star Gary Frank. **Hulk** is down at #45, this month's biggest faller, but expect this to be nothing more than a glitch.

Marvel's overall poorest performance for months can be written off as an unexpected hiccup. With major events happening at DC, plus Image's new McFarlane related title and the *Extreme Prejudice* crossover from Extreme Studios, most of Marvel's dippers should reappear in the bottom half of the chart in the coming months.

DC Comics maintains its 32% share of the top 50. **Superman/Doomsday: Hunter/Prey** retained its position from last month, although it had had two entries in the top 50. The Superman family of titles continues to be DC's saving grace. With the Man of Steel still riding the crest of a wave of popularity everything featuring the Kryptonian is charting. Expect DC's share of the chart to actually go up in the coming months, as a direct result of the **Zero Hour** crossover.

Batman is coming back and the *KnightsEnd* storyline has consolidated the Dark Knight's appeal. Although Batman's *Elseworlds* annuals didn't chart, the year long *Knight* sagas have kept Batman and related titles firmly rooted in the top 50.

Steel has re-entered the chart on the strength of the DC/Milestone crossover, **Worlds Collide**. The armoured superhero is a re-entry at 41, but is unlikely to sustain the position in coming months. **Worlds Collide** itself is DC's new entry in at 35; if the series proves to be a success many of the titles — including Milestone comics which have placed below #50 — could attract greater attention.

Green Lantern is one of the few titles DC saw fall in the chart, but the added attention through the revamped character should keep it in the charts for the coming months.

Charting last month for the first time since October 1993 was **Sandman**. Now the title continues to climb the chart, being up a further 3 places and it seems the Americans are finally realising the quality of a title that Britain has recognised all along.

Image Comics should be elated at their increased share of the chart in the wake of a number of comics' poor performances in recent months having cast a shadow of doom and gloom over the company.

Cyberforce continues to creep up the charts, recent fan reaction to Marc Silvestri's work has seemingly placed the Californian artist along side the likes of Lee and McFarlane. The success of **Cyberforce** and **Codename: Strykeforce** (a re-entry) bodes well for the former **Wolverine** and **X-Men** artist.

Prophet rose a mammoth 18 places, rather abatting *Comics Economics* cynicism regarding artist Stephen Platt's pulling power.

It is interesting to note that of all the Image titles actually in the top 50, not one of them dropped in position. But there was a casualty not instantly apparent, **Newmen** dropped completely out of the chart with only its second issue.

Spawn and **WildC.A.T.s** seem entrenched in their top ten positions, although it is somewhat of a mystery why **Spawn** and **X-Men** continue to alternate as top title. This month's **Spawn** is the second part of a three part storyline, while **X-Men** is the prologue to the summer's big crossover. It is possible that the sales of the two books are so close that only a very small anomoly in retail ordering could cause the switch.

WildC.A.T.s moves up another place and the Claremont scripted (from three to four-part) serial seems to be holding its own.

Valiant has returned to the top 50 after a one month absense, but a new entry with **Starwatchers** 1 charting at #38 is not at all in line with previous first issues. The upcoming **Chaos Effect** crossover in two months will determine whether or not the newly acquired Acclaim company can still cut the mustard.

General analysis: The following titles failed to generate enough sales for the top 50: From Marvel: **Black Cat** #1, **Blade, the Vampire Hunter** #1, and **Galactic Guardians** #1. From DC: **Batman: Legends of Dark Knight Annual** #4 and **Lobo** #7. *continues overleaf*

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Image titles which failed to place in this month's top 50: **Newmen** #2, **Phantom Force** #2, **Freak Force** #7 and **Shadowhawk Gallery** #1.

Independent publishers non-charting major titles:
Dark Horse: **Martha Washington Goes to War** #1, **Star Wars: Droids** #2 and **Aliens/Predator: Deadliest of the Species** #6
Malibu Comics: **Star Slammers** #1 (Bravura imprint) and **Warstrike** #1 (Ultraverse imprint).

Overview: Ups, Downs and Outs

Titles that dropped out of the chart this month (not including one-shots and concluded mini-series):

	issue #	last month	this month
Ghost Rider	51	(36)	73
Spec Spider-Man	214	(29)	56
Web of Spider-Man	114	(30)	57
Ghost Rider 2099	3	(48)	55
Newmen	2	(37)	53
Star Wars: Droids	2	(43)	54

Okay, comic-watchers, here's the summary...

Titles rising: 21
Titles falling: 16
New entries: 4
Re-entries: 8
Non-movers: 1

Highest new entry ..... **Violator** #1 (Image)
Highest climber ..... **Catwoman** #12 (DC) up 22 places
Biggest drop .. **The Incredible Hulk** #419 (Marvel) down 21 places
Highest re-entry ..... **Maxx** #9 (Image)
Longest time out of chart **Codename: Strykeforce** (Image) 2 months

Most appearances in top ten: **X-Men** & **Uncanny X-Men** (9 months); **Spawn** (8 months; including the Batman team-up); **WildC.A.T.s** (6 months - all have never featured outside top ten); **X-Men 2099** (7 consecutive top ten places, 9 consecutive top 20 places).

Eight month breakdown:

% = number of titles in top 50

	#35	#36	#37	#38	#39	#40	#41	#42	#43
Marvel	36	34	34	38	44	40	48	48	38
DC	20	18	18	26	26	28	30	32	32
Image	34	32	32	22	18	24	18	18	28
Dark Horse	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	0
Valiant	6	8	6	8	4	4	2	0	2
Malibu	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
Defiant	2	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bongo	0	0	4	4	2	2	2	0	0

Publishers' % family of titles shares:

X-family	20	18	16	18	22	16	20	24	20
Super family	10	8	8	14	14	14	16	16	16
Batman family	10	6	10	10	10	12	14	12	12
Spider family	12	8	8	10	10	12	12	14	10
Extreme titles	16	12	12	10	6	8	10	4	6

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REVIEWS

It is the intention of ***Comics International*** *to help comics readers keep abreast of the entire range of titles currently available through direct sale specialist shops, good newsagents and mail order companies. Few retailers allow titles in stock to be read before choosing purchases;* ***Comics International****'s reviews are designed to counter this and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section should be of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a new title after purchase.*

Review codes: *General competitive performance of a title is measured on a scale of 1 to 10. A specific issue's quality, as measured against previous issues: <- - -> to <+ + +>.*

Two ratings are used for the sake of detailed and fair coverage. The number following each review (on a scale of 1 to 10) is a quality comparison with other similar titles currently being published. We make no attempt to compare ***Cerebus*** *to* ***Spider-Man****, but review each within the context of its own genre.*

The individual issue is also rated within the confines of its previous issues. Hence a comparatively dull title may get a low number but a high rating for the specific issue reviewed (ranging from <-> to <+ + +> if there has been a notable improvement.

Reviews Editor: *Sarah Bolesworth*

Reviewing panel: Carl Bateman (CB), Phil Hall (PH), Richard Hopkins (RHo), Rol Hirst (RH), Richard J Johnston (RJJ), Dez Skinn (DS) Michael Sperlinger (MS)

DC COMICS

American Freak 4 (Vertigo; Louapre & Locke) The rapidly mutating Damien and the exhibits from the freak show escape from the castle and return to America, where Damien discovers a revelatory spiritual love with Scylla. This has been a thoughtful, down-beat tale, depressing but gripping nonetheless. (RHo) **8**

Animal Man 72 <+> (Delano & Pugh) Buddy is no longer human, and Ellen seems to be turning away from him to find comfort elsewhere. Meanwhile, Maxine's resurrection paves the way for Buddy to go into religion, which should prove interesting now that Delano is getting back on track. (RH) **7**

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 61 <+ -> (O'Neil & Baretto) Bruce Wayne's quest concludes and the *deus ex machina* to heal his broken back is brought into effect, in a slightly more believable way than I'd have expected. Still a copout, but it's worth it to know that the real Batman will be back soon. (MS) **6**

Batman: Shadow of the Bat 28 <+ -> (Grant & Blevins + Smith) Commissioner Gordon comes to the realisation that the surrogate Batman is going too far over the edge, and his long-standing friendship is over. To be honest, after seeing Jean Paul Batman beat a group of hoods to a pulp once, it's enough to last me a lifetime. I'm with the Commish — bring back the detective guy! (RH) **4**

Green Lantern 52 <+ -> (Marz & Carr + Ingle + Banks) As with many of these revisions of old characters, you'll either love or hate the new G. L. Me, I'm sticking with him because he's got a playful attitude, amusing girlfriend (not just a bimbo or potential housefrau) and some nice artwork. (RH) **7**

Hellblazer 78 (Vertigo; Ennis & Dillon) Ennis' final storyline begins; an old friend dies, racial tension brings London to boiling point, Constantine tries to rescue a junkie ex-girlfriend, and the First of the Fallen finds an ally from a most unexpected source. This looks like a good 'un. John veers from cold bastard to near pathetic, desperately out of his depth. Hilarious yet brutal scenes of kung fu-wielding pimp despatched by dependable old Chas. (RHo) **9**

Huntress 1 (Dixon & Netzer) After years of doing Neal Adams rip-offs, somebody's obviously bought Mike Netzer (Nasser) a copy of Frank Miller's **Sin City**. The result is a drastic change of style that could have almost worked if not for the garish colouring — anybody at DC notice that **Sin City** is in black and white? The story is standard vigilante fare. (RH) **4**

Justice League America 89 (Vado & Campos + Branch) Yet another new beginning for the JLA, with sub-Image art (count those speed lines!) and even worse, sub-Image characterisation and scripting. Very colourful, very loud, lots of explosions — but no soul. It breaks my heart to think how I used to love these characters. (RH) **2**

Legionnaires 16 (Waid & Gardner + Cramer) Mark Waid takes over as writer and makes a promising start kicking up a cracking pace as things build up for **Zero Hour**. Existing members vanish and new members appear mysteriously, often mid-fight scene, and the founder members make what is apparently a one-way trip into the time-stream. All good entertaining weirdness, ably assisted by Chris Gardner's cartoony but pleasing art. Colourful, fast and fun. (CB) **8**

Robin 7 <+> (Dixon & Grummett) The confrontation we've all been waiting for begins: Bruce Wayne returns to take back his cowl from Azrael. The story pretty much writes itself — Dixon seems to be saving his best scripting for **Robin** these days — and the art is as lovely as ever. (RH) **8**

Rogan Gosh (Vertigo; McCarthy & Milligan) A pseudo-mystical, semi-comic trip to the far side, Indian style. The plot is just the other side of indescribable (told from five, count 'em, five different perspectives) and the art — a brain teasing collage of colours and images — makes sixties' psychedelia look drab. Experimental would be too tame a description; how about ... mouth watering? (MS) **8**

Sandman 60 <+> (Vertigo; Gaiman & Hempel) While Lyta Hall hunts the Furies through a mythical land, Dream resurrects the Corinthian and Lucifer refuses to retake Hell. It's fashionable to badmouth Gaiman, but after a year of him treading water, my faith in his work is proving justified. (RH) **9**

Scarab 7 (Vertigo; Smith & Eaton) Scarab is bewildered and depressed by his life as a supernatural superhero, and he finds himself powerless to prevent General Grushko unleashing the Gloryboys' astral holocaust. Bizarre, surreal goings-on (a bit like Morrison's **Doom Patrol**) — ably handled by the creators. Sometimes confusing but always entertaining, this book deserves a permanent run. (RHo) **7**

Shade 48 <+ -> (Vertigo; Milligan & Bond) A meeting with Stringer on Meta explains much of the mystery of Shade's home planet, the Celestials and the Devil. Still the most stylish book on the market, with quirky characters and lovely art. (RH) **9**

Swamp Thing 143 (Vertigo; Morrison + Millar & Hester + DeMulder) The rampaging swamp creature pursues Abby to the Arizona desert; but Alec saves the day, fusing again with his vegetable body in the process. One of comics' most unusual love stories comes to an end while sinister figures plot in the background. Not quite the "shocking new direction" promised, but *Bad Gumbo* has been an interesting read and Millar's solo run promises much. (RHo) **7**

<+ -> An extremely well paced, cinematic conclusion to M & M's much touted revamp. The art again veers from striking to crude, but the final showdown with the swamp monster is still aptly tense. A promising basis for the Millar solo run, although he could be a bit more reader-friendly to newcomers. (MS) **8**

<+> Alec defeats the rogue swamp beast and is reunited with Abby only for her to break his hear genuinely touching scene. Looking at the subplots bubbling in this book, I'm excited in a way I haven't been since Grant left **Doom Patrol**: this is now Mark Millar's book. This look promising... (RH) **9**

Witchcraft 1 (Vertigo; Robinson & Snejbjerg + Kristiansen) A brutal slaying in Roman Britain incurs the wrath of the Three Witches. Seeking revenge, they tutor the reincarnated victim in the Black Arts to help destroy her murderer — now a medieval constable. Robinson is a highly talented writer, proving himself here to be as adept at **Sandman**-style historical horror as more traditional super-heroics. Snejbjerg's art complements his writing well. (RHo) **8**

Under-promoted and expensive, this medieval story of murder, retribution and black magic will almost certainly not reach the audience it deserves. It's a perfect dark age period piece, packed with good characters and sumptuously illustrated. Enthralling and even — dare I say — bewitching. (MS) **10**

James Robinson shows there is life beyond *Neighbours*, with this interesting tale of the Kindly Ones from **Sandman**. A young girl learns witchcraft in a nunnery with the sole intention of avenging the brutal murder of one of her ancestors. Nice art and a script that doesn't bog you down. (RH) **8**

Xombi 1 (Milestone; Rozum & Birch + Giddings) The combination of the Byrne cover and the fact that I'd actually enjoyed **Xombi** 0 surrounded by the Milestone dross made me pick this comic up, and I liked it! Milestone's venture into Vertigoland is quite acceptable and a fun read, similar to a later Grant Morrison **Doom Patrol** — almost too similar. Reminds me a lot of the Pentagon sequence. Recommended nonetheless. (RJJ) **8**

MARVEL COMICS

Amazing Spider-Man 391 <+ -> (DeMatteis & Bagley + Emberlin) Since his return to Spidey, DeMatteis seems to be specialising in the shock endings that actually *do* shock. Here I was caught completely off guard by Aunt May's heart-attack, brought on not by the attack of another supervillain, but simply by the stress of trying to keep her family together. Shame they can't get a new artist to go with the new writer! (RH) **8**

Daredevil 329 (Chichester & McDaniel + Collazo) DD, Captain America and Iron Fist battle Hydra terrorists in a New York under siege, as *Tree of Knowledge* continues apace. Both writing and art make this one of Marvel's best, but perhaps a couple of slower issues were needed after the changes wrought in *Fall From Grace*. Continued use of guest stars is becoming annoying. (RHo) **7**

Force Works 1 (Abnett + Lanning & Tenney + Garcia) Behind the most infantile cover-enhancement yet (pop-up!) is a typically fraught tale of macho heroes realising "the world's a much tougher place now, we need to be tougher to cope with it" — with art that falls somewhere between Jae Lee and Kevin Nowlan (but ends up looking silly in places). Of its kind, it's not *that* bad. But not that good either. (RH) **5**

Hellstorm 15 (Ellis & Manco) Hellstorm and Jaine travel to Florida, where a writer's house has been claimed by the demon Inanna. It's astonishing that Marvel publishes this: the scenes of torture are genuinely horrific, while Ellis' letters' page seeks to introduce the kids of America to the evils of fags and booze and late lie-ins. Refreshingly subversive. (RHo) **8**

<+ -> Oh yeah, Warren really has hit his stride now... *Cigarette Dawn* is a delightfully sick haunted house story (with acid drips in the eyes among the tortures offered to visitors). A crisp script and a knowing wink from the writer, this is just plain, old-fashioned, bad-taste fun. (RH) **9**

Incredible Hulk 418 (David & Frank + Smith) Okay, so I bought the special cover. This issue: Peter marries Rick and Marlo... literally! Bad puns and jokes all around as the wedding of the decade commences. Plus at least one more reference to the fact that the Impossible Man is Mr Mxyzptlk. Plus, God makes his debut appearance in a Marvel Comic. Gee, is Marvel Comics claiming copyright on deities, now? As superhero comics go, you can't get better than this. (RJJ) **9**

<-> It was a bit of an anti-climax. I expected more and it didn't deliver. There is so much "building for the future" that the current storylines are tending to fizzle out rather than end with a bang. Still head and shoulders better than other Marvel titles; it's just that you expect more

from a double-sized comic with a hefty cover price. (PH) 7

<-> Rick and Marlo's wedding is done in style, even if David sometimes teeters on the self-indulgent. As funny and well illustrated as ever, but you have to hope this isn't the last we'll see of the married couple — who have recently been as much a part of the book as Bruce. (MS) 8

<+> Hundreds of guest stars invade the wedding of Rick and Marlo, making it the biggest bash since Reed and Sue tied the knot. But the emphasis here is on sitcom rather than fight scenes, and that makes it one of the most enjoyable comics this year. (RH) 10

Marvel Comics Presents 158 (Davis & various) The ClanDestine makes its debut, and we are promised a summer series. A good, old fashioned fight scene sets us off with an angst-ridden twist at the end. Do you remember your first time? The first time you saw Batman hit the Joker, the X-Men fly across the Danger Room and Legion of Superheroes run to the rescue? Well, it's all here, condensed and made fresh. With rumours of Alan Davis doing a new DR & Quinch strip for **2000AD**, might we see a resurgence in Davis's popularity... watch out for that offer from Rob Liefeld, Alan! (RJJ) 7

Sachs & Violens 3 (David & Perez) After this issue, JJ Sachs will truly become one of comicdoms greatest heroines, not because of David's amazing writing of Perez's intricate details, but because we finally get to see what she keeps under her T-shirt. Most Brits won't get the Barney references... but rather than being puzzled by an oversize dinosaur, just be grateful that you haven't been exposed to this American monstrosity. (RJJ) 8

Spectacular Spider-Man 213 <+> (Nocenti & Fry + Buscema + Ramos) Spidey encounters Ann Nocenti's favourite creation, Typhoid Mary, in time to see her develop an even deadlier personality. I can't help but be reminded of Grant Morrison's Crazy Jane, but this is still an interesting tale and a nice break from the regular Spidey stories. (RH) 7

Spider-Man 2099 #21 (Edgington & Fern + Nyberg) David's absence is immediately apparent in this fill-in; the story (Spidey takes on three psychotic yuppies) is okay, and so is the art. But it's all fairly routine, there's none of David's flair or originality, and it's clear that without him, 21st century Spider-Man is just the same old Parker in different duds. (MS) 5

INDEPENDENTS

Arena 17 (Sky; magazine) The last issue, not surprisingly. The Todd McFarlane interview is mostly space filler and the Brit-Bits section is so awful, mostly because I recognise the article was already published in **Fantazia**... in 1990! The news is always **Arena**'s better feature and it covers a wide publishing arena. It's dead now though, and there's not much to mourn. (RJJ) 3

'Breed 4 (Bravura; Starlin) Nice cover. Very nice cover. But story? This has confirmed my fears about the series, it really is about *nothing*. I can't relate to it, the story doesn't grip me, I can't feel for the characters. Which is a shame

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because I know that Starlin must have poured himself into the comic. It feels like hackwork — and while I can put up with that from Marvel, I feel insulted when it's under the Bravura imprint.(RJJ) 3

<+ -> Raymond discovers that his mother is still alive — just — and journeys to her bedside to put her out of her misery. One thing that lifts this book above the average is Starlin's storytelling, at times almost cinematic. (RH) 7

Cerebus 181 <+ -> (Aardvaark-Vanaheim; Sim + Gerhard) While Cerebus has a violent confrontation with Cirin, Sim moves the text pages into an autobiographical discussion on the practice of writing and drawing the book itself. A different approach, but he pulls it off as always. (RH) 9

Charlemagne 2 (Defiant; Chichester & Pollina + Witherby) Poor balancing of words and pictures detract from an otherwise fair start for Defiant's own superman. The art is competent but uninspired and unlikely to attract the MTV/Image '90s comic readers. War Dancer's guest appearance leads to extensive fight scene but without stronger layouts, the script is left floundering. Despite effective colouring, the total lack of cover copy on Defiant titles combined with middle-of-the-road visuals will also hinder pulling in the much-needed new readers. Shooter may have the vision, but he is lacking in strong back-up. (DS) 6

Cud (Fantagraphics; LaBan) The Bob Cudd story is still the highlight of this wonderful book. But the Jackie Kennedy strip had me rolling in the street. Seriously, all you conspiracists should read this one! You'll love it. Good to see **Cud**'s sales rising too. This is a book that deserves to hang around with **Hate, Love and Rockets, Eightball** and **Naughty Bits**. (RJJ) 9

Dogs of War 1 (Defiant; Shooter + Holcomb + Lapham & Jeanty + Downs + Miller) There's an adage that the greater the number of contributors the worse the movie. **Dogs of War** has six words and pictures people. A disappointing first issue, with workmanlike art (by unknowns Georges Jeanty, Bob Downs and David Miller) not worthy of the coated paper stock. Through its lack of name contributors, Defiant's line now charts below the recently cancelled Axis Comics. Rather than expand in an already-crowded market, Shooter would be advised to strengthen his existing line, not weaken it with such poor new titles. (DS) 4

Dreadstar 1 (Malibu Bravura; David & Colon) I haven't read **Dreadstar** since creator Jim Starlin was still writing the book, and a lot has changed since then. Vanth is gone and now his daughter looks set to take his place. Slow at first, but with David in control, this series could be worth watching. (RH) 6

Haunt of Fear 7 (EC/Russ Cochrane; various) At this point (early summer 1951) the EC horror titles began to hit their stride. Where previously they had offered run-of-the-mill nastiness, this issue introduces the EC trademarks of man's inhumanity to man and of the shock ending. From this point on, these titles really are essential purchases! (MK) 7

Hellboy 2 (Dark Horse/Legend; Mignola w/Byrne) Hellboy and his superhuman companions battle the vampire frog creatures, while the reappearance of the Nazi magician hints at Hellboy's true origins. Mignola's art is stunning, and Byrne delivers a decent script but, is it just me, or is this rather slow? Things will have to move pretty fast in the last two issues. (RHo) 7

Hero Special Edition: The 100 Most Important Comics of All Time (Warrior Publishing) This is pretty good and may be worth picking up to sit next to your **Understanding Comics**. While some of the picks are debatable, they do a hell of a better job than **Wizard** did. By including comics like **Cerebus** and **Love and Rockets**, it shows a greater understanding and awareness of the comics medium. There have been a few misses, but this pinpointed some comics for which I would give my drawing hand. (RJJ) 8

Lowlife (Aeon; Brubaker) Lowlife makes my day. A letter to DC's Firestorm by Ed graces these pages as love, sex, fear, Chicago and Archie conspire to tell tales of honest life. Please buy this comic, I'll bet you'll find yourself in it somewhere... (RJJ) 8

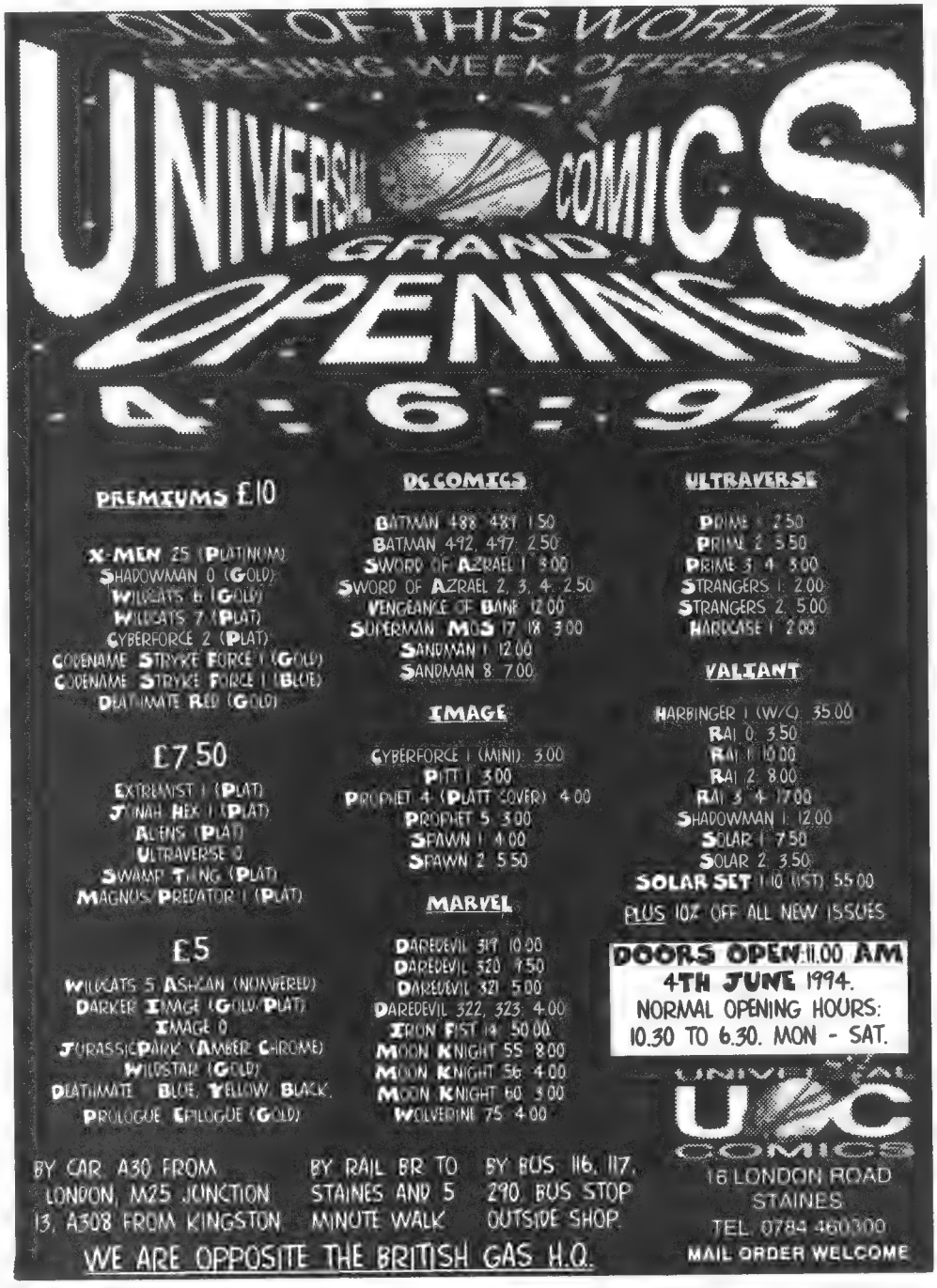
Maison Ikkoku Part 2 #5 (Viz; Takahashi) The slightly too long-suffering heroine reveals a tough side when faced with family troubles. Takahashi's story may be trite, but the wealth of characterisation, clever structuring and constant switching between pathos to humour make this the most consistently enjoyable manga title I've found yet. (MK) 8

Next Men 25 <+ -> (Dark Horse; Byrne + Webb) As New York fills with imaginary comic characters made real (including guest appearances by Monkeyman & O'Brien and Wendy Pini's elves), the Next Men race to save Sandy Tolliver from her out-of-control powers. Just a load of fun! (RH) 9

Power and Glory 3 (Malibu/Bravura; Chaykin) Powell, the American Powerhouse, gets the fame, money and women, despite his disastrous effort at superheroics. Gorski is press-ganged into performing genuine heroism as an Apex double. Chaykin's view of the world infuriates some people, but the way the media seizes on the superhero in this issue has the ring of truth. If costumed heroes did exist, there's a good chance they'd be just like Powell. (RHo) 9

Rune 3/Ultraverse Premiere 1 (Malibu; Windsor Smith + Ulm & various) Making the first Ultraverse Premiere flip-book back-to-back with BWS's excellent and highly original **Rune** was a big mistake, for it shows up the one-dimensional nature of the Premiere stories. Cliches abound, so stick to the side with BWS — he knows what he's doing. (RH) 8/2

Sin City: A Dame to Kill For 6 (Dark Horse/Legend; Miller) The final, fatal confrontation of Dwight and Ava. If the first series was Mickey Spillane, this one is Raymond Chandler: a desperate, flawed hero, a genuine femme fatale perfectly characterised by Miller's superb art and bone-dry script.



Having said that, the denouement is rather predictable, but I can't wait for the new series (to be published in November). (RHo) 9

<+ -> Dwight has his showdown with Ava. "Steam rises from her skin. Everything she's done and I still can't take my eyes off her." It's the sort of writing that could so easily backfire and sound corny and melodramatic, but Miller gets away with it every time. (RH) 9

Tribe 3 (Axis; Stroman & Johnson) Stroman's art gets very sketchy in this issue and this comic has really lost a lot of the visual appeal that originally sold the title to me. The creative team seems as if it is getting really tired with the book, and it seems as if the love that fuelled the first issue has run away to hide — and that really is a shame. (RJJ) 4

War Dancer 3 (Defiant; Weiss + Shooter & Weiss + Yoakum) Ex-member of Neal Adams Crusty Bunker art team, Alan Weiss is co-scripting and drawing Defiant's strongest title. Despite a tedious link with **Warriors of Plasm**, **War Dancer** does work as a stand-alone purchase and rewards the buyer with more script than half a dozen issues of most mainstream titles. While the colouring could use more theme and less variety, Weiss's solid artwork and the attractiveness of the lead character makes this an excellent buy. (DS) 9

SMALL PRESS

Attom 4 (£1.95 from R. Parkinson, 60 Allen Avenue, Stanground, Peterborough PE2 8TN) At times the sheer violence of the zombie comic approaches a level of sensuality to which the mainstream titles may aspire but will never dare achieve. I don't like it, and the figure drawing is still too stiff, but it's an impressive exercise in repulsiveness. (MK) 6

Astonishing Beer Stories 2 (£1 from N Sambells, 47 Upper Green St, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 2RB) One of the most astonishing things about this comic is the expressiveness with which Sambells' utterly flat, geometrical art imbues the dry wit of his tales about boozers, spooks and science fiction. It's a little hard on the eye, but genuinely innovative — and entertaining, too. (MK) 7

Battleground 5 (£1.75 from Andy Brewer, 58 Kingsley Court, Aylesbury Close, Salford M5 4EZ) Andy Brewer's critical 'zine improves with every issue, both in production and content. This time the balance between fact, opinion and debate is as finely managed as is the even-handed coverage of mainstream and small press productions. Since it really does contain something for everyone, you should buy it immediately! (MK) 9

Better Than Nothing 13 (20p + 25p p&p from BTN c/o Screaming Dave, 34 Oaklands Drive, Westone, Northampton NN3 3JL) More senseless ramblings from the growing BTN group of contributors. The only criteria for having work reproduced is, it seems, is a disregard for sanity. Completely loopy nonsense that, if inclined, will have you laughing and you won't know why. The better featurettes include; *Things Parents Say*, *National Toilet Week '94* and the irreverent *Letter From Errol*. It's so cheap it's worth wasting your money on it. A best of **BTN** 1-10 will be available in July. (PH) 8

Bonafide 0 (£2.00 from Bonafide Productions, 23 Albany Rd, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5LQ) Although I can't fault this for its professional production, or point to any lack of expertise in execution, it does appear to be entirely influenced by the work of certain **Deadline** artists. Some may find this appealing, but to me it appears merely derivative. (MK) 4

Copter Cops 2 (£1 plus postage from L. Noel White, 87 Listria Park, Stoke Newington, London N16) If the artwork in this is better than issue 1, then I'm glad I didn't see that issue. Featuring Prophet and Bishop (I'm sure Marvel and Image are quaking in their boots) in some of the most underwhelming adventures I've ever witnessed. I'm afraid it's back to the drawing board, chaps. (PH) 2

Freaky Shenanigans 3 (85p from David Hill, 40 Church End, Harlow, Essex CM19 5PG) It would be quite wrong to describe this as autobiographical, but Hill's own constant, idealised appearances and mixture of black humour and cynicism give it a remarkably personal, engaging feel for what is essentially a gag comic. With limited but nonetheless effectively stylised art, this is an unusual and rather enjoyable number. (MK) 5

Grit 1 (£1.25 from Steve Marchant, The LCC, 14 Conlan St, London W10 5AR) Another of the LCC's regular anthologies of student work, this time with a Wild West theme. If this seemingly arbitrarily chosen context is a test of professional adaptability, several of these artists don't make the grade — despite the quality of their work and ideas. Buy this for the confidently cross-hatched work of Kelly Smith, but don't dismiss the others just because they fail to fit the format. (MK) 6

The Jack Kirby Quarterly 0 (£1.15 from C. Harper, 25 Napier Drive, The Parklands, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 7NW) A special obituary production, containing tributes by professionals and fans, and an excellent selection of art reproductions which convey the range and quality of Kirby's work far better than words. (MK) 5

Posse 7 (approx £4; from Posse, Entrepotdok 71A, 1018 AD Amsterdam, Netherlands; or order it from Titan.) A very strong and varied anthology of Flemish work with an underground slant. Although this first English language issue isn't as good as previous Flemish ones, it still demonstrates what a massive pool of talent is to be found in northern Europe, and knocks spots off most English productions. Well worth investigating, despite the expensive cover price. (MK) 9

Unskinny 2 (Lucy Sweet) This is a great Jamie Hewlett/Roberta Gregory mixed comic about women. With Jo Brand-style humour, all us weak willed men had better watch out before we get sat on. Especially all you sensitive indie types. Very funny, great comic... **Deadline**, are you reading this one? (RJJ) 9

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Comics International invites you to submit your comics-related queries, both for your own enlightenment, and that of our general readership.

Peter Talbot, Strandhill, Co. Sligo, Ireland

AS A Barry Windsor-Smith completist I'm hoping you or your readers can help me with this one.

In the letters page of Steve Moore and Steve Parkhouse's fanzine **Orpheus** #1 (March 1971) the letters are commenting on the previous issue — called **Aspect #2**, which also contained story and art by Barry Smith.

One of the letters states *"The art in Tales of Hyperborea — magnificent. If further proof be necessary that Barry Smith has vastly improved since his "powerhouse pin-up" days, Paradox Man serves as a worthy vehicle for that proof."*

I presume the letter writer is referring to the old **Terrific** and **Fantastic** Marvel reprints, but which issues, if any, did Barry Smith art appear in?

Finally, what other issues of **Aspect/Orpheus** contained Barry Smith art, and does anyone out there have copies for sale? Any general info on **Aspect/Orpheus** would be appreciated.

***Aspect** was a comics fanzine launched by IPC/Odhams sub-editor Steve Moore, who went on to become a professional comics writer, his credits including **Warrior**'s Father Shandor and Axel Pressbutton. Though **Aspect** lasted only two issues (1969 and 1970), by the second issue Steve had been joined at IPC by other US comics fans, including Kev O'Neill (then soon to produce the fx fanzine **Just Imagine**), Steve Parkhouse, Chris Lowder and Dez Skinn (already responsible for a range of comics fanzines).*

*This influx spurred Steve, who had been co-editor of one of Britain's first comics fanzines — **Ka-Pow**, to produce the 64 page all-litho second issue of **Aspect** (5/-), which featured Paul Neary, Denis Gifford, Jim Baikie, Alan Hunter, Bob (**Fortean Times**) Rickard, Steve Parkhouse and Barry Smith.*

*While still teenagers, both Steve and Barry had earlier worked freelance for Odhams "Power Comics" line, producing pin-up back covers of Marvel super-heroes for **Fantastic** and **Terrific**. Then, in 1969, they visited New York in search of comics work but, following short stints at Marvel (on **Daredevil, X-Men** and **Ka-Zar**), not having work permits, they were forced to return to the UK.*

*Steve Moore's **Orpheus** followed the second and final **Aspect**, again featuring Parkhouse and Smith, but as professional work increased, the title was dropped after one issue and Barry returned to New York on the success of his work in **Conan the Barbarian**.*

The pin-ups for Power Comics hadn't been signed and were very early crude examples of Smith & Parkhouse's work. I couldn't identify them over 25 years ago. Good luck in finding them, but Barry will hate you for it!

*However, his new **Rune** #0 premium title for Malibu should prove easier to find as it will be made available soon through this very magazine to save you having to order it from the States. (Dez)*

Neville Peacock, 166 First Lane, Hessle, Humbs

BACK IN 1966, as a child I was given a small lead figure which I thought was Supergirl. This figure started my interest in superheroes and, of course, comics.

Later I discovered the figure was in fact Marvelgirl. Can any of your readers tell me anything about this figure?

Unfortunately, there are no manufacturers' marks, but I would be interested to know if any other of the Marvel family was produced and roughly when it was made?

Confusion reigns. Mary Marvel was the female in Fawcett's Marvel family of super-heroes, but they stopped publishing in the 1950s.

*Marvel Comics had a Marvel Girl from **X-Men #1** onwards, but nobody here knows of any such model of her being produced.*

Any keen lead figure collector care to help out? (Dez)

Paul D'Gama 23 Hayley Common, Stevenage

CAN YOU recommend a book or books discussing the history of comics — particularly from the Silver Age to modern day?

*Steranko's **History of Comics** remains sadly incomplete, but the first two large format softback volumes are highly recommended, though long out of print. Les Daniels' **Marvel, Five Fabulous Decades** (1991, Virgin, £30, UK hardback) is far better than the title implies. Ron Goulart's **Over 50 Years of American Comic Books** (1991, Mallard Press, US hardback) is also recommended, while Denis Gifford's **International Book of Comics** (1990, Hamlyn, £9.99 UK softback) gives an sweeping overview of the entire industry.*

Surprisingly, no book springs to mind dealing specifically with the 1960s boom to date. (Dez)

Paul Rummey, 86 Summer Rd, Thames Ditton, Surrey

I'VE been reading and collecting comics for a long time and have always wanted to get involved. I have always been a keen artist, but I'm more interested in the inking side of the business.

I have a good portfolio of work, but I need to find out the addresses of comic companies so I can get my work viewed by people in the business.

I would greatly appreciate and advice you can give me about getting my work seen?

We're constantly being asked for addresses and phone numbers. Check the indicia of titles publishing your kind of work, then get the phone number from directory enquiries on 192 (or international directory enquiries on 153). Phone the company to get a contact name for submissions — always better than such vague terms as "art editor". But start with smaller publishers, you've a better chance of having your work accepted (less competition) and a published portfolio will later impress bigger publishers far more than a wad of photocopies. (Dez)

Chris Gibson, 8 High Ash, Shipley, West Yorkshire

I AM A young collector and I currently collect **Bartman** and **House of Hammer**. I have only started to collect recently so I don't know much about **House of Hammer**. Could please give me some info on it; date published, price, authors etc,.

*We do not make these letters up, honest! But Chris couldn't have chosen a better person to ask about **House of Hammer** as it was one of my own early titles. No room here for the Skinn-Warren war story which led to the title change several times (but if you ask, maybe next time).*

Suffice to say, it featured Bolton, Bolland, Neary, Gibbons and Gibson in their pre-USA days and ran 30 issues from 1975 to 1983, which we occasionally advertise herein when space permits.

Anybody wanting details now should send an SAE for a full listing. (Dez)

J. Cawthorn, 34 Northbourne St, Gateshead

COULD you tell me if it is still possible to buy **Comics International #37** (Nov '93)?

I would like to check if it carried a details to the effect that UKCAC '94 would be held at Manchester's G-MEX Centre instead of the usual London venue.

All our back issues, except #1, 3, 5 and 23 are available at £1 each (inc p&p) from the address at the top of this page.

But to specifically answer veteran fantasy artist Jim Cawthorn's G-Mex question: it is not connected with UKCAC, which will be held on October 1-2nd at its regular London venue.

Comics Expo '94 was to be held at G-Mex this November, but 1994 appears to be the year that such events are pulling in their horns. Because of admin problems, last month's Barbican London event, HTC World, proved to be a nightmare for exhibitors and organisers alike while New York's ComicFest has been cancelled completely.

With publishers on both sides of the Atlantic suffering from decreased sales on almost all titles, promotional budgets are not allowing for major expansions and with the last thing our industry needs being another flop, Comics Expo has been postponed. (Dez)

Wolf Klewe, 9 Cossack Lane House, Winchester

I HAVE a large collection of comics which I would like to keep in at least reasonable condition. I am thinking of the medium term, say 20-25 years. Since they are largely acquired in the 25-50 pence boxes at comic fairs, with only one or two required to complete a run purchased at anything like guide prices, very few of them warrant the expense even of acid-free backing boards, never mind Mylar sleeves.

What comprises a danger to the comics? Is it:

1. Air? Can I get around this by packing them tightly together without using sleeves at all?

2. Contact with the next comic? Can I get around this by separating the comics with acid-free backing boards, or several sheets of paper? If I use paper how can I find out if it is acid-free? And does it matter if the paper has been printed on? (This is not a trivial question, I have access to a limitless quantity of used paper.)

If I must use sleeves, how long can I leave the comics in them before changing the sleeve, assuming it's a sleeve of ordinary quality?

Incognito — see ad elsewhere this issue — offers an Abbey ph Indicator pen which tests the authenticity of acid free backing boards (priced £3.95 inc p&p).

But if your comics are not high value items, given our temperate climate, your biggest enemies are dust, dampness and sunlight.

Comic bags and comic boxes should counter these three foes and settle your mind inexpensively though purists maintain you should stack comics flat to avoid warping.

Using paper dividers — plain or printed — you run the risk of the paper divider being even higher in (the forced whitening) acid/bleach content which can ultimately lead to premature ageing browning the comic paper and even foxing (where metal impurities in paper cause brown "liver spots" on covers).

Comic bags should also be left open so air circulates, provided you don't live in a damp climate. Avoid taping the flaps, the adhesive spreads out over the years and makes a mess on the front of the following bag. Then you need change the bag very infrequently. I've had comics in bags for over 20 years with only bag discolouration on the outside leading to renewal for cosmetic purposes. (Dez)

In answer to various letters and a question in an earlier *Q and A* column, we can now confirm that we will be following last month's **Ultraverse #0** offer with exclusive UK distribution of the full range of Malibu premiums, including the Bravura premiums, the **Rune #0/Solution #0** title mentioned above and the Ultra debut cards. Start saving your coupons and watch for details. ... Dez Skinn (Editor)

MAIL ORDER index

WITH the ever-increasing diversity of comics and related items being offered to readers through the post, the ***Comics International*** *Mail Order Index has been designed to help the buyer identify specialists in key areas of collecting. As this is primarily a postal service, readers are advised to telephone during standard working hours if wishing to view.*

Code to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available
dis	= bulk discount terms
cat	= catalogue available
s-cat	= sae for catalogue
s-wants	= sae with wants lists
CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
cc	= major credit cards accepted
sae	= send stamped, self-addressed envelope with your enquiry

GOLDEN AGE TITLES

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945 but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order,** 158 Kent House Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, s-cat, cc) 081-659 9714

■ **Incognito,** 14 Starnes Court, Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) Phone/Fax 0622-683642

■ **Silver Acre Comics,** The Studio Cottage, Edern, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 6JD (s-wants, cc) 0758-720 532

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 081-449 5535

SILVER AGE TITLES

Generally deemed to commence in 1955 with DC Comics' hero rebirth through ***Detective 225*** *(introducing the Martian Manhunter) and* ***Showcase 4*** *(introducing the new Flash), herein covering up to late 1960s.*

■ **Cosmic Comics,** PO Box 1771, London E17 9PW. (cat, wants, CoBRA)

■ **Graphically Speaking,** 49 Roman Road, London E2. (s-wants, CoBRA) 081 983 4602

■ **Heritage Comics,** 195 High St, Alsagers Bank, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 8BA (cat, wants) 0782 723329

■ **Incognito,** 14 Starnes Court, Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) Phone/fax 0622-683642

■ **Just Comics,** 2 Crossmead Ave, Greenford, Middx UB6 9TY (cat-28p, CoBRA)

■ **Silver Acre Comics,** The Studio Cottage, Edern, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 6JD (s-wants, cc) 0758-720 532

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 081-449 5535

POST-SILVER AGE

Comics from the 1970s to date: Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Valiant Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless decide on a name.

■ **Comics Warehouse,** PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 0621 850351

■ **Cosmic Comics,** PO Box 1771, London E17 9PW. (cat, wants, CoBRA)

■ **Darkside,** 32 Marlborough Road, London E18 1AP (wants, CoBRA) 081 989 9955

■ **Heritage Comics,** 195 High Street, Alsagers Bank, Stoke on Trent, ST7 8BA (cat, wants) 0782 723329

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, Herts EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 081-449 5535

HOT COMICS

Current or key titles, usually first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble on what will increase in value.

■ **Comics Unlimited,** Unit 11, The Arcade, Letchworth, Hertfordshire. (wants, CoBRA) 0462 480018

■ **Cosmic Comics,** PO Box 1771, London E17 9PW. (cat, wants, CoBRA)

■ **Darkside,** 32 Marlborough Road, London E18 1AP (wants, CoBRA) 081 989 9955

■ **Edge of Forever, The,** 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. (wants, CoBRA, cc) 081-298 1363

■ **Floppy Tongue,** 96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP2 7QY (cat, w/s, wants, CoBRA) 0722 331107

■ **Graphically Speaking,** 49 Roman Road, London E2. (s-wants, CoBRA) 081 983 4602

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 081-449 5535

ADVANCE IMPORTS

US comics are not in newsagents, except for almost all DCs and most $1.25 Marvels, shipped seafreight. The following offer air-shipped copies from all major publishers.

■ **ACE Comics,** 1 Headgate Buildings, St Johns Street, Colchester, Essex C02 7AD (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 0206 561912

■ **Beyond Comics & Books,** 1 Ballina St, London SE23 1DR (s-cat, s-wants, CoBRA) 081 291 7171

■ **Comics Unlimited,** Unit 11, The Arcade, Letchworth, Herts SG6 3ET (s-cat,s-wants) 0462 480018

■ **Edge of Forever, The,** 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. (wants, CoBRA, cc) 081-298 1363

■ **Floppy Tongue,** 96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP2 7QY (cat, w/s, wants, CoBRA) 0722 331107

■ **Forbidden Planet,** 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG (s-cat, cc) 071 497 2150

■ **Gosh! Strips by Mail,** 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 071 636 1011

■ **Mega-City Comics,** 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ (s-cat, cc, CoBRA) 071 485 9320

■ **Planet X,** 5 London Road, Worcester WR5 2DJ (wants,CoBRA) Phone/fax: 0905 355055

■ **Red Hot Comics,** 42 Berridale Ave, Cathcart, Glasgow G44 3AE (CoBRA, s-wants) 041-637 0162 (10am-11pm)

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 081-449 5535

■ **Timezone,** 12 Fish Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR (dis, cat, wants) 0743 365192

LIMITED EDITIONS

Many high-profile mini-series and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order,** 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, s&n, s-cat, cc) 081-659 9714

■ **Darkside,** 32 Marlborough Road, London E18 1AP (wants, CoBRA, ash) 081 989 9955

■ **Edge of Forever, The,** 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. (wants, CoBRA, cc, s&n) 081-298 1363

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n) 081-449 5535

TRADING CARDS

An increasing number of traders carry a wide range of comics-related trading cards and their peripherals (files, folders, etc).

■ **Adventure Seekers!,** 105 Hullbrook Road, Billesley, Birmingham, B13 OLE (cat, wants) 021 444 0986

■ **Fantasy Domain,** 212 Grange Rd, Plaistow, London E13 0HB (s-cat, s-wants, CoBRA)

■ **First Choice Cards,** 11 Keith Avenue, Liverpool L4 5SL (cat, wants, CoBRA) 051 5214054

■ **Floppy Tongue,** 96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP2 7QY (cat, w/s, wants, CoBRA) 0722 331107

■ **Next Millennium,,** 14 Newark Way, Hendon, London NW4 4JL (wants, dis) 081-203 0014

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 081-449 5535

■ **Timezone,** 12 Fish Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR (dis, cat, wants) 0743 365192

ORIGINAL ART

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available.

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order,** 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, s-cat, cc) 081-659 9714

PORTFOLIOS & PRINTS

Specialists in high quality images, of American and/or European origin.

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MERCHANDISE

Comics-related t-shirts, posters, video games, video films, badges, etc.

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 081-449 5535

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Acid-free protection for valuable comics. Backing boards, bags, storage boxes, etc.

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order,** 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, cc, s-cat) 081-659 9714

■ **Edge of Forever, The,** 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. (wants, CoBRA, cc, s&n) 081-298 1363

■ **Incognito,** 14 Starnes Court, Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) Phone/fax 0622-683642

■ **Just Comics,** 2 Crossmead Ave, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 9TY (w/s only, CoBRA) 081 578 1308

■ **Stateside Comics PLC,** 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis, CoBRA, cc) 081-449 5535

COMICS AUCTIONS

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions can provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their comics.

■ **Comic Book Postal Auctions Limited,** 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 071 586 3007

■ **Flights of Fantasy,** 82b Broadway, Bexleyheath DA6 7LW (cat) 081-298 1363

MANGA TITLES

English language translations and Japanese-style American comics.

■ **ACE Comics,** 1 Headgate Buildings, St Johns Street, Colchester, Essex C02 7AD (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 0206 561912

■ **Edge of Forever, The,** 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. (wants, CoBRA, cc) 081-298 1363

ART & REFERENCE

Comics history reference magazines & books (ref) plus art books (art) and newspaper strip compilations (strip).

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order,** 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, ref, art, strip, s-cat, cc) 081-659 9714

■ **Edge of Forever, The,** 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. (wants, CoBRA, ref, cc) 081-298 1363

ALTERNATIVE & BIOG

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life titles (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar, etc)

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

The latest news, views and rumours in our ever-popular independent look at the hits, misses, prices, projects and people making comics news. Reported by the ever mysterious and controversial team of investigative diggers and delvers known to the world only as ITMA.

Clone alone

THE BIG rumour circulating the comics grapevine in the USA at present is "What is going to happen with Spider-Man?"

Fans' tongues are wagging over an announcement from Spider-family editor-in-chief Danny Fingeroth. It seems that events over the next twelve months in all the Spider-titles will ultimately lead to irrevocable changes in Marvel's premiere money-spider.

Rumours are rife in the USA that the long forgotten (presumed dead) clone of Peter Parker is to return over the next few months as Spider-Man's life continues on its downward spiral.

We can exclusively reveal that Marvel *does* intend to bring back the (presumed dead) clone, last seen in **Amazing Spider-Man** #150 in some ambiguous photographs (was it the clone or not?).

One particular rumour which originates from Marvel's own offices is that after the forthcoming clone story line, it becomes pretty obvious that the Peter Parker we've been reading about for the last twenty-odd years is in fact the (presumed dead) clone of Peter Parker. Confused? You will be!

Another theory is that the clone causes the death of Aunt May in issue 400 of **Amazing**. Rumour has it that Aunt May — who isn't very marketable (not too hot for toys and t-shirts) — will die in **Amazing Spider-Man** 400 of the heart attack we have all knew she would one day have.

So what happens when you have two people who can both be Peter Parker and Spider-Man? You split the four ongoing monthlies between the two characters, giving the clone an identifiable mark.

Die-hard Spidey fans will probably already be threatening to boycott the books, but under the guidance of Spider-writer extraordinaire J.M. DeMatteis, even if the story line isn't pleasant, it will be well worth following to see what how far the groundbreaking Spider-Man writer will go to revitalise the Webslinger.

Cracking the code

DARK Horse Presents issue 80 is beginning to rise in value. A series which has had a rather unremarkable run of issues since its early **Aliens** and **Concrete** stories, it has been revitalised with the advent of Dark Horse's creator-owned Legend imprint.

The first official Legend characters to appear in **DHP** were John Byrne's Next Men, followed by a **Sin City** story by Frank Miller, but they were long before either creator had the idea of a Legend imprint. Only six months old, **DHP** #80 featured the first appearance of Arthur Adams's *Monkeyman & O'Brien*, but dealers are already asking £5 for the comic containing this exquisitely drawn 8 page strip.

Many people have discovered the excellent new Legend series **Hellboy: Seeds of Destruction** — which currently features the *Monkeyman & O'Brien* origins in the back up strip.

For those of you who were trying to figure out Monkeyman Axwell's first words on Earth in **Hellboy** #2, look no further. Our High Wycombe ITMite and master codecracker has deciphered all those little squiggles and boxes in the speech bubbles. They are as follows.

Page 1, panel one: *Fear not, little creatures, I mean you no harm.*

You probably don't understand a word I'm saying, do you?

Page 2, panel one: *My name is Axwell Tiberius.*

Page 2, panel two: *They must be intelligent, they aren't grunting or hooting.*

Page 2, panel three: *Well, I'll worry about communications later...*

Page 2, panel four: *First I want to check their technology.*

Page 5, panel one: *Better check my subspace anchor to make sure.*

Page 5, panel two: *Oh no! I've got to find it or I'll be trapped in this dimension!*

Page 5, panel four: *No! After all these weeks following the general, it can't end like this!*

Page 5, panel five: *Juna, my wife...*

So, there you have it, Monkeyman's first words in the Legend universe.

A sharp exit

THERE will be a lot of shocked and dismayed Hulk fans out there when they discover that Gary Frank is leaving the title in the next couple of months. But it is the reason why he is leaving that will really puzzle fans...

Issue 417 of **The Incredible Hulk** featured Rick Jones's bachelor party, which consisted of, mainly, "skin flicks" and merriment. In Gary Frank's original pencils, all the guys at the party were drinking beer, allegedly Marvel re-pencilled the alcohol-containing beer panels and changed all the tins to soda. The movie at the end of the comic which reveals fiancee Marlo's previous occupation originally featured the co-star topless but tastefully obscured. After Marvel's touch-up crew finished with it, Marlo was soon sporting a bikini.

Gary was said to have been upset by the changes made without anybody asking him if he would change them himself. He is reported to have told Bobbie Chase that he would have made the changes and was annoyed that his artwork should have been tampered with without his permission.

I'm sure we will all hear Hulk writer Peter David's interpretation of Gary's departure in due course.

So, who's lined up for the replacement penciller job? Strong

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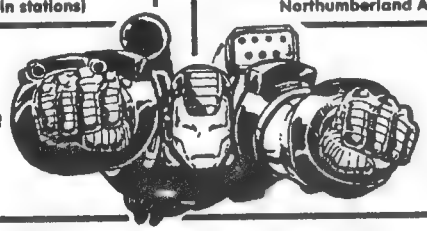

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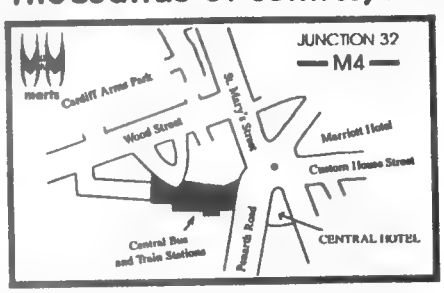

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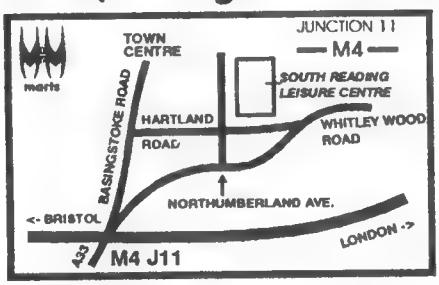

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+ GLOUCESTER COMIC MART: JULY 30 / SEPT 24 / DEC 3

humour has it that Liam (**Death's Head II**) Sharp has expressed an interest in the title, but cynics have expressed concern about his staying power on a regular book.

Editor Chase, when handling **GI Joe**, had lined up another former **Death's Head II** artist, Simon Coleby, to take over her toy-tied title, but was then replaced on the book herself. She has said she would like to work with the 25 year old Lowestoft-based artist, so he to could be in the frame.

Carlos (**Wild Angels**) Pacheco and Bryan (Mr Xerox) Hitch are other Marvel UK artists interested in giving ol' Greenskin a shot.

Sell out sleepers

RETAILERS across the country have reported increased sales activity on a lot of new titles, so watch out for market moves on any of the following comics:

● **Vengeance of Vampirella** #1 from Harris Comics is by Tom Sniegoski and art-newcomer Buzz. It was seen priced at £3.50 for issue one at a recent London mart, and although it is only a rise of £1.25, for a obscure indie book less than two months old it is worth keeping tabs on.

● **Shi** from new indie publisher Crusader Comics is the tale of a samurai woman and her struggle for inner peace and vengeance for her family. Shops upped their orders on the strength of the preview of issue one in the pages of **Diamond Previews** and **Advance Comics** and have been rewarded with sell outs in many areas.

● **Drama** from Sirius Press is definitely worth keeping your eye on. Our First Choice Wholesale ITMite reported that sales on this completely unknown independent anthology went through the roof. Seemingly on the strength of the **Advance Comics**'s exclusive three page preview of the title, featuring the art of **Cry For Dawn**'s Joseph Michael Linsner. This could be this summer's independent sleeper.

● **Hellboy: Seeds of Destruction** is selling fast and although series creator Mike Mignola is an acquired taste, it seems that he is being acquired by a lot of collectors. Issue one is selling for a premium, as is **Hellboy**'s first appearance in **John Byrne's Next Men** #25 (Faith part 3), now the most expensive of the series.

● Adam Warren's **Bubblegum Crisis: Grand Mal** is helping the current popularity wave for US manga with the Dark Horse mini-series selling well and sparking interest in another Warren series, **Dirty Pair**.

● The new **Gen-13** and **Kindred** mini-series from Image have been good sellers, especially in the States where **Gen-13** #1 is selling in excess of $15 and #2 $7. Expect the announcement that the mini, about a group of mutated teenagers, is to get a regular ongoing series.

Make them suck eggs

WARREN Ellis, the new writer on Marvel's **Hellstorm**, has, it seems, single handedly saved the life of Marvel's demonic hero.

Recent critical reviews and (more importantly) an increase in sales have seen the title reprieved from certain cancellation.

Warren now takes over as writer on the mutant title, **Excalibur**, as of issue 83 and, on the strength of his first script, editor Suzanne Gaffney has offered him the work on a permanent basis.

Warren's first job will be to sort out the current mess that has befallen Captain Britain.

Still reeling from receiving the **Excalibur** assignment, Warren was then approached by *2099* group editor Joey Cavelieri, and offered **Doom 2099**. A dream come true, as Doom has always fascinated Ellis and he intends to explore the science fiction elements of the series more thoroughly.

Pat Broderick, the series' artist, is leaving with writer John Francis Moore, and Argentinean artist Alcatena joins Warren on the book from issue 26.

Just when you thought it might be time for Warren to take a breather, he is due to write a **Ghost Rider** fill-in, this year's **Ghost Rider Annual** and two issues of **Ghost Rider 2099**, one of which will be pencilled by departing artist Mark Buckingham.

So it seems that Vertigo hasn't got the monopoly on the British talent working abroad and Warren Ellis is certainly turning a few heads in the Marvel offices. Ellis said of his incredibly busy agenda "I think I'm scheduled to die sometime in December."

X-citing mini-series

THERE are a number of projected X-Men mini-series planned for the next twelve months.

● With the four issue **Rogue** mini (scheduled for later this year) being one of the most eagerly awaited minis in mutant history we can exclusively announce that the series will reveal Rogue's hitherto undisclosed origin. The book is written by Howard Mackie and drawn by Bryan Hitch (in a style of his own choosing).

It seems that contractual obligations have prevented the original scheduled artist, Adam Hughes, from doing the series (so now you know what style it will be drawn in).

● Spaniard Carlos Pacheco (well, he'd hardly be an eskimo with a name like that, would he?) is the artist on the Scott Lobdell written **Bishop & the XSE**, which will explore life 100 years into the future of the X-Men and give enlightening information as to the mother and father of Bishop and his deceased sister, Shard, and the startling revelation to the identity of the X-traitor.

Rumour has it that Bishop will end up being his own father. And Storm will be his lover, and then his mother! When Chris Claremont left

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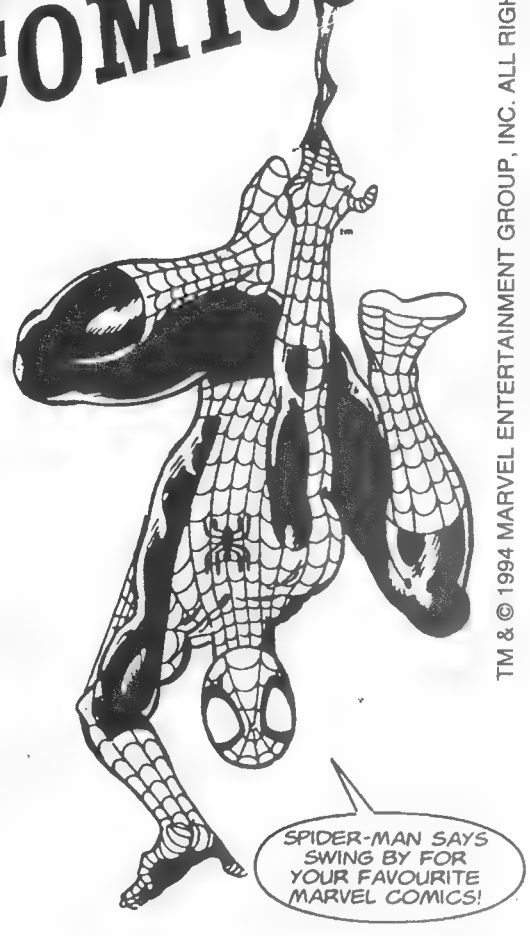

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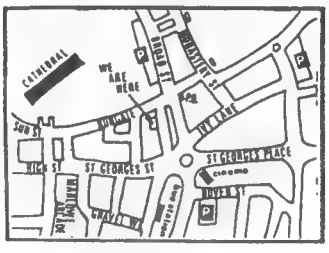

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the X-titles, we understood that things were going to get simpler!

● Domino is to get her own series, but whether it is to be a mini or an ongoing has not been determined. The projected team for the title is Mark Waid and Ian Churchill, the creators behind the forthcoming **Deadpool II** mini.

● The Peter David created character Random is also to get his own limited series in what X- editor Kelly Corvese hopes will have the same effect on fans as the launch of the **Venom** series. Critics have described Random as a mutant equivalent of Lobo.

Marc DeMatteis is being talked about as the writer, but no artist has been linked with the project yet. Wise money could be on the character's co-creator, Joe Quesada, a recent defector who hasn't slammed the Marvel door closed behind himself.

The wait may be over

COMICS International's news editor, Phil Hall, was recently drinking in a Northampton pub with **Violator** writer Alan Moore.

One of the questions Phil asked the writer was why he wouldn't allow his critically acclaimed **Captain Britain** Marvel UK run to be reprinted by Marvel US, with it being the story they have most been asked to reprint.

Because of a disagreement between Moore and Marvel over a reprinting of a **Doctor Who** UK story, such memorable Alan Moore and Alan Davis episodes as *The Jaspers Warp* and *The Fury* have never been seen in America and have never been mentioned in **Excalibur** or Captain Britain continuity since Moore's departure.

This may change. Moore said that he felt bad about the situation and had been unfair to the original writer, Dave Thorpe, and regular series artist Alan Davis by refusing to allow a collected reprint edition. This has resulted in these creators not being able to receive any royalties for work done.

Alan told Phil that if Marvel want to reprint the series he will not stop them and will donate his royalties to either Alan Davis and Dave Thorpe or to the Comics Legal Defence Fund.

Are you reading this, Marvel?

Danger Unpatronised

JOHN BYRNE's return to mainstream super-hero action in **Danger Unlimited** is end after only four issues. Poor sales, somewhere in the 30-40,000 region has led the Walsall-born writer-artist to cancel the project, although he intends to continue with mini-series that are connected to the **Danger Unlimited** concept, kicking off with the more-commercially titled **Babe**.

It really is a shame that well executed mainstream work from an industry leader no longer cuts the mustard through the direct sale market when substandard in-yer-face hackwork can make unknown proteges a better living with rival publishers.

A perfect example is **Doom's IV** from Rob Liefeld's team which is also in the Fantastic Four tradition. This title had initial sales of 100,000 and initial reports have indicated that **Youngblood** is a masterpiece in comparison.

Upcoming projects

● JOE QUESADA is rumoured to be artist on a new title from Extreme Studios. He is currently co-creating a character with Rob Liefeld. But don't expect another Ninjak/Bloodshot/Azrael as he apparently wants to handle less gritty superheroes.

● Film buff and current editor of **Gay Comix** Andy Mangels is also working with Liefeld on an upcoming **Bludwulf** mini series.

● John Byrne is to write and draw a Marvel/DC crossover book that will not feature Batman or Superman. The grapevine is betting on Wonder Woman (Byrne likes her) or The Flash from DC, while Marvel's possibilities include Daredevil and Captain America.

● Howard (**Power & Glory**) Chaykin is working on a Batman graphic novel for DC, presumably minus his usual S&M treatments.

● Chris Claremont's two Superman graphic novels are called *Rage of an Angel* and *Whom the Gods Destroy*. He is also finalising the script for the adaptation of his novel **First Flight** into graphic novel format.

Critic turned creator

COMICS International *Reviews* contributor Richard J Johnston has won the National Student Cartoonist of the Year Award, organised by the National Union of Students and **Zit** magazine. He is reported to be "quite thrilled."

Richard has the first issue of his own comic, **Dirtbag**, coming out in August. **Dirtbag** will be a self published venture and the first three issues feature celebrity jams on the covers, including such luminaries as Neil Gaiman, Simon Bisley, Brian Bolland, Jeff Smith, Dave Sim and David Lloyd.

The comic which has been described as *Monty Python meets Love and Rockets meets Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* could well become a cult classic.

Lois & Clark II

POPULAR TV series **Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman** (which the BBC finally realised aimed at an audience older than the 5.45 slot) is back for a second series.

Following the supposed death of Luthor (yeah? So why could we hear a helicopter in the background. Perchance a body switch in the long drop from the tallest building in Metropolis), he'll be back but not so prominent in series two, as will a few super-powered villains, allowing for guest shots.

The first series, up against *seaQuest DSV* and *Murder She Wrote* finished between the two. An admirable rating, beating Spielberg and closing just behind the most watched tv series in the States.

Purr-sponed

MYSTERY surrounds the 3 week delay on the far better balanced **Purr Quarterly** #2. Printed in Hong Kong, rumour has it something inscrutable happened to the delivery.

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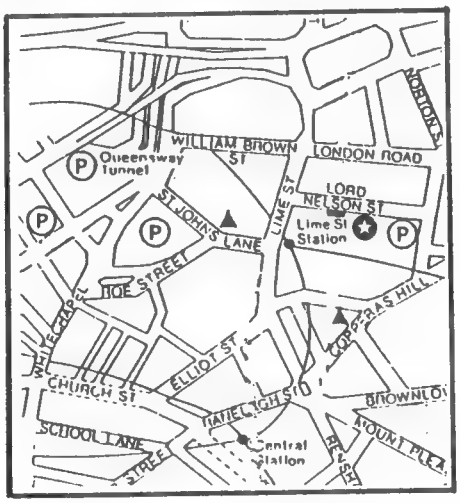

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LETTERS

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Comics International Letters, 8 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ

*SOMETIMES I wonder how we ever get **Comics International** out at all. Since last issue, I've attended three major conventions which have taken almost two full weeks out of the month (in London's Canary Wharf, the Barbican and Barcelona).*

*Barcelona was the most interesting. It brought into focus what's happening in Europe ... and possibly Britain. I last attended as a guest in 1984, at their first ever comics festival. At the time publishers such as Toutain and Norma had an exciting range of indigenous titles, from the traditional **Cimoc** and **Kung Fu** to the more experimental **Cairo**.*

*Now, twelve years later, the entire country appears to have given in (except for the ever-rebellious Jose Maria) to reprinting American super-heroes. **Cimoc's** still out there, but little else is home grown.*

Even Italy is coming around to super-heroes to the point that Marvel has recently set up its own Italian division instead of syndicating. This is fine, I grew up on a mixture which included super-heroes. But it was exactly that, a mixture.

Faced with a declining audience over the years, European publishers have looked to save costs. While they originally snubbed super-heroes, the substantially lower investment and improved US production methods has led to Europeans now falling in line.

*Why risk deadline problems **and** pay more for new material — with all the extra costs plus colouring and colour film separations — when it can be offered as a complete package, script, art, colouring and separated into the four colour films?*

Difficult to resist during a recession, but let's hope the profits earned will lead to an investment into new material, if only to find work for those excellent Spanish and Italian artists who are currently having to learn how to draw super-heroes to get any work!

... Dez Skinn (Editor)

Paul Slattery, 50 Ringstead Rd, Paston Ridings, Peterborough

CERTAIN issues were raised in letters printed in **Comics International** #40 that I had been meaning to raise myself for a while now. Chief among these were: *Do we want a British comics industry or what?* and *The importance of being adult in comics.*

Speaking as an aspiring writer, I can't be the only one who feels thoroughly cheesed off with being constantly rebuffed; only to find the ideas submitted and rejected turn up a few months later — no credit given.

I originally submitted material of my own, as I don't really want to work on existing characters; having plenty of my own to work on as it is. If they concluded that my own material had merit; why not take a chance on letting me write about a few of their own characters, if that's what it takes to break into the medium?

So what I want to know is: are there any like-minded individuals out there who seriously want to work in comics who've been similarly frustrated in their endeavours to break through? Is there a market — bearing in mind that the existing market has been somewhat saturated these past few years — for quality adult comics?

There's been too much quantity and not enough quality, and my idea of *adult* goes way beyond gratuitous sex, violence and bad language. The blatant plagiarism that seems to abound at this time also irritates me intensely; not to mention the constant re-hashing of old concepts — with varying degrees of success — that (for whatever reason) didn't really work out the first time around.

And finally, are there people prepared to invest in such an industry in this country? I'm talking long-term, not somebody out to make a quick killing. The majors and independents started out small and gradually expanded. If I get a positive response on all levels, I propose to use a similar strategy.

The sort of material I work on in my spare time could be described as SF soap opera. I believe in creating well-rounded, believable characters, and utilising them to explore contemporary issues, while having a lot of fun along the way! Some people are already striking the right balance, but there's a helluva lot of material being published that is either form without substance or simply second-rate.

I know I can do at least as well as the best of them, given the opportunity, and I'm sure there must be others out there who feel the same. Another point I would like to make clear is that I intend to see that this venture, should it get off the ground, should be creator controlled as much as possible.

Editorial staff obviously have a role to play, but I don't feel it's entirely fair that the money men behind a creative venture should expect to be in complete control. After all, without the creative input of the artists the venture wouldn't make any profit.

I'd like to ask any serious, motivated creative people, any fans (the feedback would be invaluable) and any business people who feel they'd like to see quality comics being produced to please contact me.

Mike Kidson, 40 Marmion Rd, Liverpool L17 8TX

IS THE British mainstream really in any worse condition than it has been for the last few years, or is it just that US investors seem to have given up?

It seems to me that the only hope for it is to break away from a reliance on the now clearly disinterested children's market and start anew — although that probably sounds way too risky by corporate standards.

But as long as a slow decline maintained by reasonable profits is preferred to bold experimentation, the industry's going nowhere. What's needed is a new Alfred Harmsworth — preferably without his penchant for moral hypocrisy!

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Dez said to me last month, "Hey, if you write any more into that space, we'll have to issue magnifying glasses with the magazine!" Point taken, I must admit, we did end up with a minuscule typesize last month, I'll try not to let the words run away....

In comics it's all too easy to be sexist and compose introductory phrases like "you guys..." but we have many feminine customers, so I have a question for you. How do I address everyone, without pandering to the mundane, being patronising or almost worst of all, being politically correct. Whatever your answers, and I look forward to getting them, my comments as usual are for all readers and customers.

You see how difficult it is, a huge slice of the readership of Comics International are already our customers anyway, so why opt for an arbitrary division.

Hey, I'm not going to get bogged down in semantics, let's be transatlantic, everyone's going to be a "guy" whatever their gender, orientation, or proclivity. Well guys, you really locked into our head 'em up, clear 'em out stock bargains recently. Knightfall sets, enhanced covers and the recent Reign of the Supermen packs really walked out the door, the Vertigo books are consistently in demand and Milestone is picking up, as readers are looking forward to the imminent, (as of this writing) or being published, (as of your reading) Worlds Collide storyline in which Dakota & Metropolis start to merge.

The original New Teen Titans stock from the 70's has been decimated, I'm happy to say, there are very few left, so if you fancy reading the original adventures of Nightwing and Co - get them now.

The freebies, sampler sets and packs are all well received, we're expanding their availability in this and future ads, in fact you'll find a number of stock and price changes in the advertisement this month, and we're getting into new stuff too, (as many of our customers have already discovered to their pleasure), check out our fourth page for a sample of what the Warehouse can do for you.

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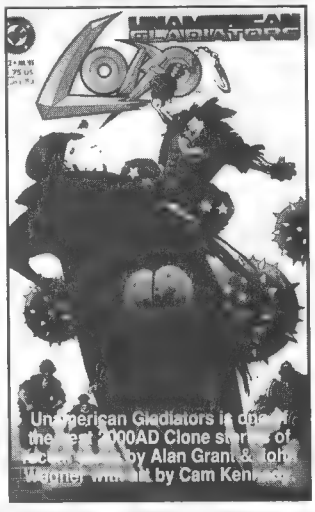

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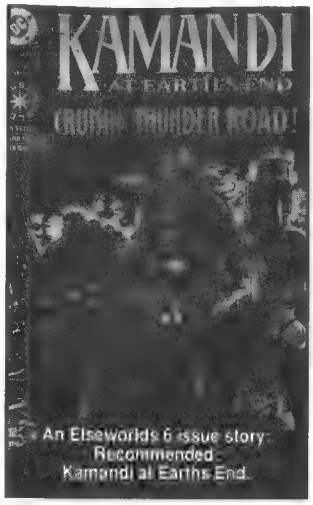

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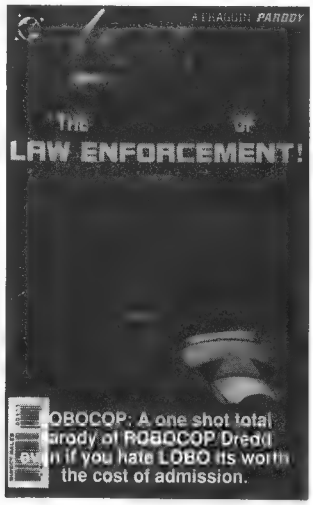

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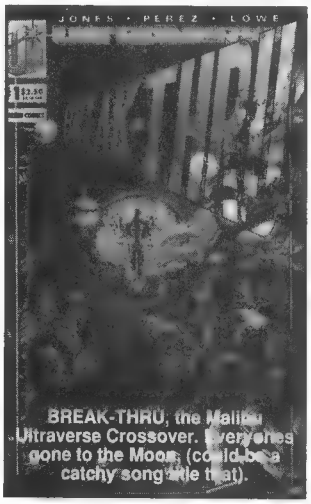

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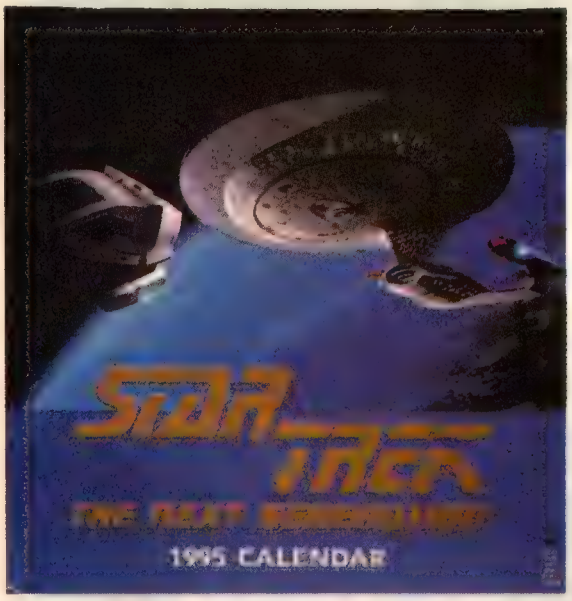

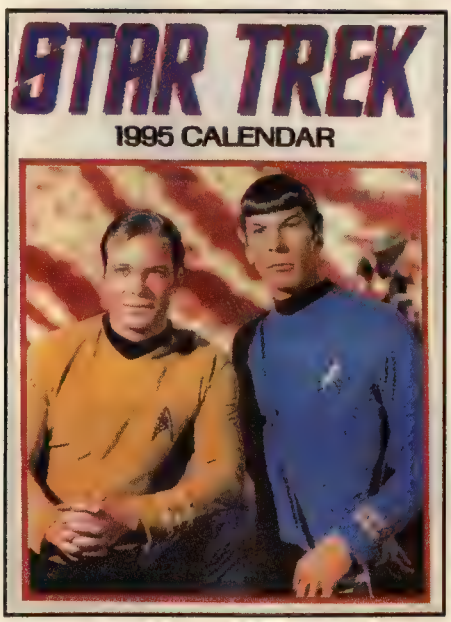

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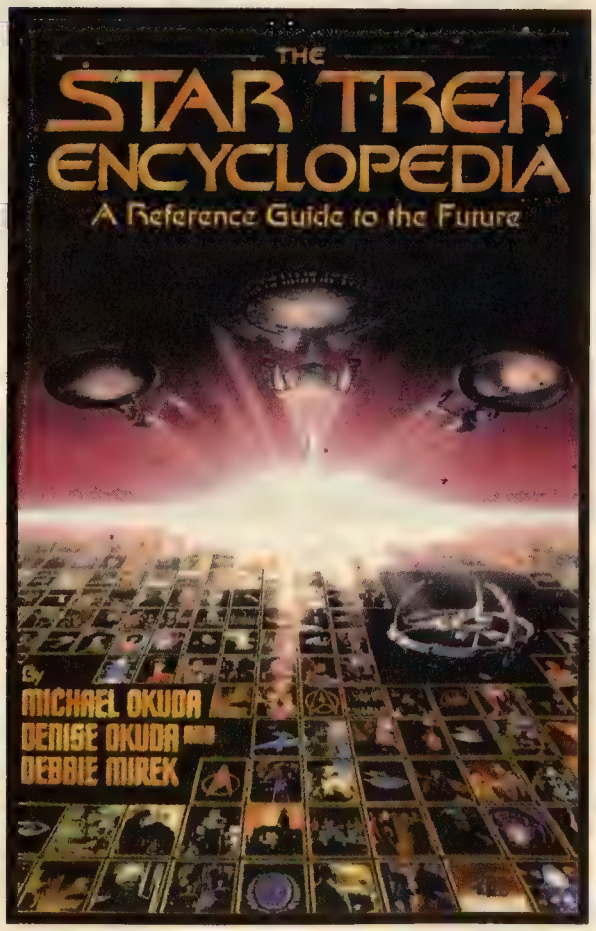

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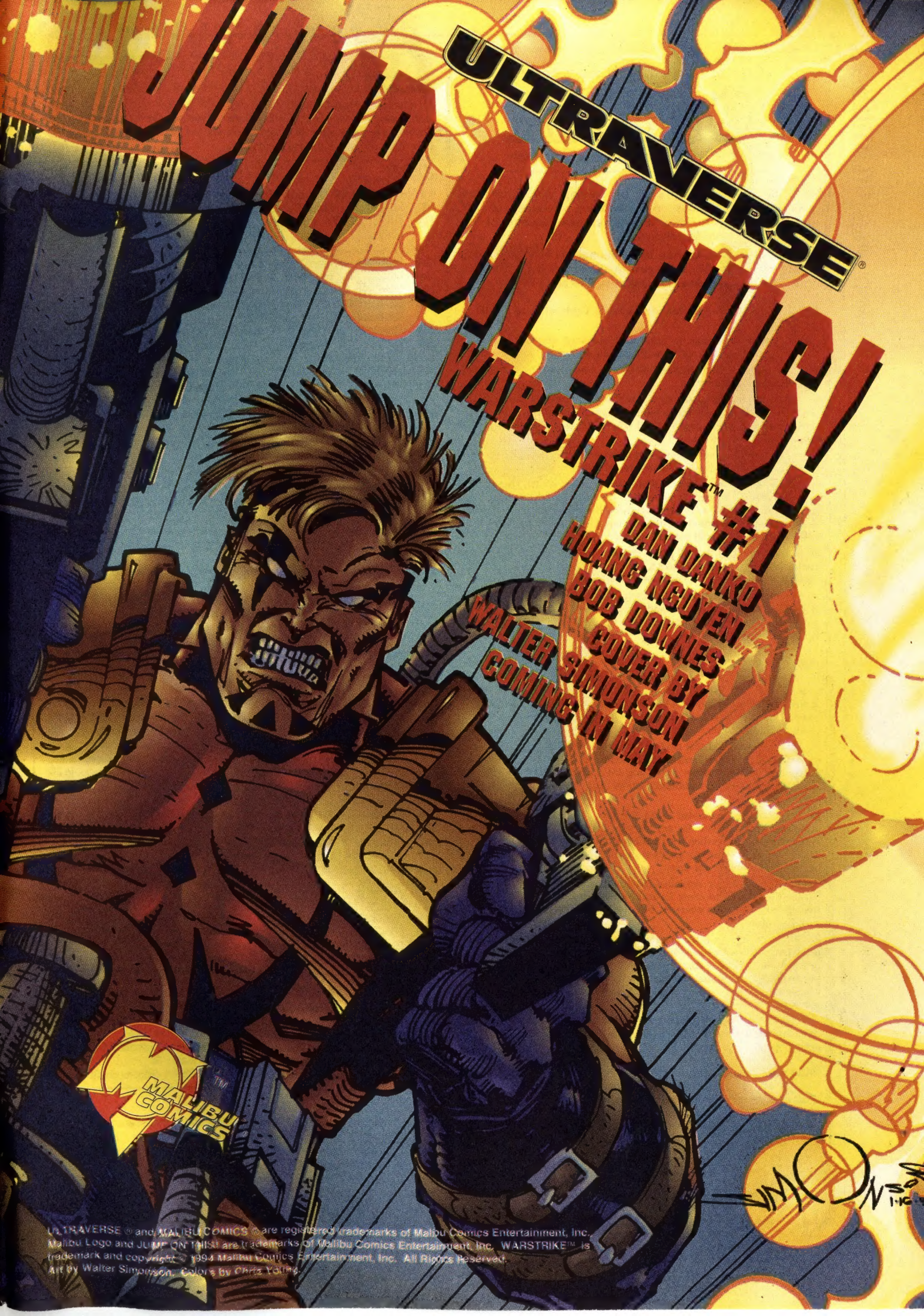
The British comics scene is almost dead! So it's time to breath new life into it. I'm planning a new 40 page anthology called **X-L** and I need your help. Write and tell me what you'd like to see, how much you're prepared to pay and your own ideas. I also need to hear from talented writers, artists, letterers and colourists, anything considered, from humour to SF to superheroes. This could be the start of something big! So come one, write Darren Jones, 32 Hampton Rd, Failsworth, Manchester M35 9HT. 061 682 9118.

The Jack Kirby Quarterly #0 (Tribute Edition) is out now; classic visuals, neat rarities, and a host of fans and pros paying tribute to the master. Priced £1.15 inc p&p. C. Harper, 25 Napier Dr, Tipton, West Mids, DY4 7NW. **JKQ** #1 available, same price.

Copter Cops 2. Far superior artwork to issue 1. You'll think its done by proffesionals. Full of action, with a story that will make you think. Brilliant script by Matt Banwell. Check it out, well worthwhile. £1 plus 25p p&p. Leonard Noel-White, 87 Listria Park, Stoke Newington, London N16 5SP.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eVENTS

An at-a-glance guide, this listing gives the dates and locations of all forthcoming events advertised this issue. A free service for advertisers, the bracketed number after each entry denotes the page this issue where the advertisement with full details appears.

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11/6	**MANCHESTER:** Comic Mart, Sachas Hotel, Tibb Street, Piccadilly, Manchester	(p 24)
11/6	**READING:** Comic Mart, S Reading Leisure Ctre, Northumberland Ave	(p 56)
12/6	**BRIGHTON:** Comics, Fantasy & Pulp Literature Mart, Brighton Centre	(p 34)
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